DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 392 101 CS 509 196

TITLE	Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (78th, Washington, DC, August 9-12, 1995). Miscellaneous.
INSTITUTION	Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.
PUB DATE	Aug 95
NOTE	412p.; For other sections of these proceedings, see CS 509 173-187.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Conference Proceedings (021)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC17 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Advertising; Agenda Setting; Computer Assisted Instruction; *Content Analysis; Cooperative Learning; *Democracy; *Journalism Education; *Mass Media; Media Research; Periodicals; Physical Disabilities; Presidential Campaigns (United States); Public Opinion; Public Relations; *Research Methodology
IDENTIFIERS	Scholastic Journalism; Television News; TV Guide

ABSTRACT

The Miscellaneous section of the proceedings contains the following 15 papers: "Selling to the Sellers: An Analysis of Advertising in 'Campaigns & Elections,' 1980-1994" (Michael S. Sweeney); "From 'Seventeen' to 'Sassy': Teen Magazines and the Construction of the 'Model' Girl" (Lisa Duke); "Survey Data Indicate Some Magazines Can Help Readers Improve Society, Government by Providing Benchmarks and Forums" (Ernest C. Hynds); "Sample Size in Content Analysis of Weekly News Magazines" (Daniel Riffe and others); "'TV Guide': A Television Gatekeeper" (Heather D. Surface); "Missing Voices in the Civic/Public Journalism Debates: 'I Never Thought a Newspaper Could Ask "What If?"' and other Citizen-Reader Observations" (Barbara Zang); "Public Journalism: Leadership or Readership? A Look at Media Involvement" (Ann Weichelt); "A Critical Review: Re-Conceptualizing the Relation of 'Democracy' to 'News'" (Carol Reese Dykers); "Expanding the Public Conversation--or Just Sounding Off? An Appraisal of the Newspaper Call-In Comment Line" (James Aucoin); "Benefits and Problems of Introducing Computer-Assisted Reporting Courses: Opinions of an Expert Panel" (Kevin C. Lee and Charles A. Fleming); "Agenda Building and the 1992 Presidential Campaign: Was It a Failure to Communicate or Did the Audience Set the Agenda?" (L. M. Walters and others); "The Video News Release: Public Relations and the Television News Business" (EE Chang); "'To Others He's Just a Helpless Man in a Wheelchair! But When I See Him Like This...' Case Studies of Physical Disability in Marvel Comics, 1961-70" (Tim Lees and Sue Ralph); "The Effects of Collaborative Learning Techniques on Student Learning and Attitudes toward Mass Communication" (James D. Kelly and Michael Murrie); and "High School Press Freedom Legislation: A Survey of Key Promoters" (Lyle D. Olson and others). (RS)

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Selling to the Sellers: An Analysis of Advertising in *Campaigns & Elections*, 1980-1994

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of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication
at the Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C., August 1995

Introduction:

Campaigns & Elections began as a quarterly in the spring of 1980 with a mission to give political campaigners up-to-the-minute knowledge about their changing craft. In introducing the first issue, publisher Stanley Foster Reed said he hoped his magazine would portray the kind of skillful management that makes the difference between winning and losing. He likened newborn campaigns to the fledgling businesses started by entrepreneurs -- in both cases, he said, one in six works magic; five in six end in disappointment. To a careful observer, Reed's observation seemed ominous. His first issue contained only eight display advertisements larger than six square inches, and an issue printed a year later had only four.

Still, the magazine survived. It targeted the novice manager as well as the professional who aimed to stay a step ahead of the competition. The publisher's editorial profile said the magazine "provides political news and information for federal, state, and local elected officials and other political professionals." Furthermore, Reed wrote in an introductory column, "C&E is and will continue to be a 'how-to' journal, bringing you the best in strategies and tactics -- what works and what doesn't, where, why, and under what circumstances."[1] Stories during the first three years testify to the validity of his nuts-and-bolts claim. Their headlines included "Impact Polling: Feedback for a Winning Strategy," "Campaign Management: Benefits of a Professional Approach," and "Low-Cost Letter Writing: How to Re-Ink Your Computer Printer Ribbon."

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[1] Stanley Foster Reed, "Introduction to the Inaugural Issue," *Campaigns & Elections*, Spring 1980, 6.

By 1991, the number of display advertisements rose to sixty-eight and the magazine had switched from a plain, black-and-white quarterly to a full-color, slick publication produced ten times a year. Paid circulation was comfortably above 11,000 in 1994. The maturing of *Campaigns & Elections* mirrored the spread of political consulting in American politics. As political observer Larry Sabato said in 1981:

> The number of consultants has skyrocketed along with the demand for their services. As late as 1960 there were relatively few full-time professionals in the field; twenty years later there are hundreds -- thousands if local advertising agency executives specializing in politics are counted. In addition, they handle a great deal besides candidates' campaigns. Referenda, initiatives, bond issues, and political action committees (PACs) sustain many firms. Some consultants enjoy overseas work in foreign campaigns or specialize in primary and convention nomination battles as well as general elections. Today the average modern professional manages more campaigns in a year than his predecessors did in a lifetime.[2]

Subsequent developments indicate a continued expansion of the consultants' role. Within a span of four years, the total spent on political advertising in the United States rose nearly 50 percent, from $153 million in 1984 to $227 million in 1988.[3] The rise in dollars coincided with the creation of what Senator Brock Adams, a Washington Democrat, called "a whole industry which caters to the needs of campaigns. We have consultants who specialize in political functions which didn't exist ten years ago."[4] The use of direct-mail videotapes in the 1988 New

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[2] Larry Sabato, *The Rise of Political Consultants* (New York: Basic Books, 1991), 13.

[3] H.E. Alexander, *Financing Politics: Money, Elections, and Political Reform* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1992), quoted in Bruce I. Newman, *The Marketing of the President: Political Marketing as Campaign Strategy* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1994), 25.

[4] Joel L. Swerdlow, ed., *Media Technology and the Vote: A Source Book* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1988), 103.

Hampshire primary[5] and Texas billionaire H. Ross Perot's independent race for the presidency, described as "the first telemarketing campaign,"[6] are further evidence of the growth of the kind of profession targeted by Reed and his magazine.

Informative books about political consultants and their techniques include Frank Luntz, *Candidates, Consultants, and Campaigns* (1988), which includes his survey of thirty-seven prominent consultants; Joel L. Swerdlow, *Media Technology and the Vote* (1988), which describes the expansion of videocassette and computer technology in political campaigns; Bruce I. Newman, *The Marketing of the President* (1994), which examines the roles of computers and direct mail in modern campaigns; and Sabato, *The Rise of Political Consultants* (1991).

Analyzing the work of consultants, Republican consultant and pollster Luntz was surprised to discover the error of conventional wisdom about technology and tactics. He interviewed thirty-seven professionals chosen because of their stature in national politics and found that three-quarters of them believed that technological innovations begin in state and congressional races and filter up.[7] Only six percent said the breakthroughs happened at the presidential level and trickled down; the rest described innovation as spreading from both directions at once.

If Luntz's survey of the consultant corps is correct, changes in the political consulting field would be expected to make an early appearance in the consultants' "how-to journal," *Campaigns & Elections*. Tracking changes in the issues since 1980 would guide the researcher through changes in political consulting and campaign management. Furthermore, an examination of the magazine's advertising would allow the researcher to anticipate increases in technology use or greater emphasis on certain campaign techniques.

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[5] Jeffrey B. Abramson, F. Christopher Arterton and Gary R. Orren, *The Electronic Commonwealth: The Impact of New Media Technologies on Democratic Politics* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1988), xi.
[6] Newman, *The Marketing of the President*, xiv.
[7] Frank I. Luntz, *Candidates, Consultants, and Campaigns: The Style and Substance of American Electioneering* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1988), 3, 236.

Advertising has been described as a method of delivering a message from a sponsor through an impersonal medium, to many people.[8] A popular college-level advertising textbook describes effective advertising as having three primary rules -- rules that suggest a link between the long-term content of advertising and the likelihood that the advertised products or services are successful. The first rule is that advertising takes the customer's view, meeting the needs of the buyer instead of the seller. Second, advertising is primarily a sales tool. Third, customers buy benefits instead of attributes -- "Consumers want to know 'What's in it for me?'"[9]

In short, the message of advertising is carefully controlled, and the continued success or failure of a product and the fortunes of its advertising are linked. It is likely that a multi-year profile of advertising in a successful magazine reflects the rise and fall of the acceptance of the advertised products and services.

This study performs a qualitative and content analysis of the display advertising in *Campaigns & Elections* magazine. The following research questions are based on an exploratory examination of the magazine:

- What are the primary messages in advertisements aimed at the readers of this political consultants' magazine?

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[8] J. Thomas Russell and Ronald Lane, eds., *Kleppner's Advertising Procedure* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1990), 23.

[9] *Ibid.*

- What differences exist among ads aimed at particular parties and campaigns?
- To what extent do these advertisements emphasize winning, or a winner-take-all attitude toward political races?
- How does content change over time?
- Is there predictive value in looking at these advertisements?

Literature review:

There is little in the academic literature about content analysis of advertising. Alan Resnik and Bruce L. Stern developed fourteen evaluative criteria for the information content of television advertising,[10] and Resnik, Stern and Dean M. Krugman adapted the criteria to magazine advertising,[11] but some of their categories -- which include "safety" and "nutrition" -- are of little use in the analysis of the tools of political consultants. John S. Healey and Harold H. Kassarjian used Resnik's and Stern's methodology in their test of the verifiability of magazine advertising claims.[12] However, this study aims merely to chart changes in the political consulting field; verifiability of political claims is beyond the scope of this research.

Stephen Lacy and Karyn A. Ramsey developed their own criteria for coding the content of African-American newspaper advertisements. They found four main categories -- display, insert, classified and legal -- and created subcategories such as automobile ads, religious ads and tobacco/liquor ads based on their exploratory analysis of black newspapers.[13] Similar exploratory techniques were used in this study.

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[10] Alan Resnik and Bruce L. Stern, "An Analysis of Information Content in Television Advertising," *Journal of Marketing*, January 1977, 50-53.

[11] Bruce L. Stern, Dean M. Krugman and Alan Resnik, "Magazine Advertising: An Analysis of Its Information Content: Do Ads Inform or Persuade," *Journal of Advertising Research*, April 1981, 39-44.

[12] John S. Healey and Harold H. Kassarjian, "Advertising Substantiation and Advertiser Response: A Content Analysis of Magazine Advertisements," *Journal of Marketing*, Winter 1983, 107-113.

Method:

The sample consists of one randomly drawn issue for each year of publication. This yielded fifteen issues: fall 1980, spring 1981, fall 1982, fall 1983, winter 1984, spring 1985, September-October 1986, July-August 1987, March-April 1988, March-April 1989, April-May 1990, February 1991, June 1992, October-November 1993, and August 1994. Only display advertisements were counted in order to avoid coding small-print, back-of-the-book ads. For this study, display ads were defined as six square inches or larger -- a size that a preliminary examination of the magazines suggested was the smallest common display ad. Only ads containing political content were counted. Five hundred and two ads fit these criteria; the handful that did not included ads for hotels, airlines and long-distance telephone service.

The display ads were coded for their year of publication, their size in square inches, their primary message, the party/ideology of the advertiser, the campaign targeted by the ad, the quality/benefit stressed in the ad, and the presence in display type of a reference to a zero-sum game.

"Primary message" consisted of thirty-five categories chosen after a study of the available literature and an exploratory examination of *Campaigns & Elections*. These categories, elaborated in the results section of the paper, were collapsed into the following groups: "Gather/use printed information" comprised advertisements urging purchase of a book, magazine or other printed data base. "Gather/use electronic information" comprised ads urging purchase of computer software, hardware or an electronic data base. "Hire expertise" comprised ads for political consultants and managers. (Before cross-tabulation, this category was split into two, "Hire general expertise" for multipurpose consultants and "Hire special expertise" for consultants stressing their skills in particular campaign tasks, such as polling and direct mail.) "Disseminate information" comprised ads for the purchase of products (or services that provide the products) to distribute information -- envelopes, signs, bumper stickers, buttons, video duplicators, etc. "Improve reader's education" comprised ads urging the reader to attend a school or conference, or to buy self-instruction tools such as video and audio tapes. "Enjoy political recreation" comprised ads for the purchase of parlor games. (These included "Road to the White House," in which the players attempt to get Boomer Littlefeet, a former Oklahoma University quarterback, elected president.) "Promote corporate image" comprised ads in which a corporation or political group aimed a political/campaign message at the reader. These included ads by the National Rifle Association and right-to-life groups softly warning campaign managers of their clout with the voters. Finally, sixty ads contained unclear or uncodeable messages and were categorized as "Other." For example, one such ad urged readers to watch CNN for political coverage.[14] While it might have appeared to fit the category "improve reader's education," that category had been defined in the coding worksheet as the offer to attend a school or seminar.

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[13] Stephen Lacy and Karyn A. Ramsey, "The Advertising Content of African-American Newspapers," *Journalism Quarterly*, Autumn 1994, 521-530.

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[14] None of the coded ads urged the purchase of network television time.

"Party ideology" coded for the presence of the words Democrat, Republican, liberal, conservative, Christian and feminist, and also coded ads that specified more than one, or none at all.

"Campaign targeted by ad" coded ads that specified applications to presidential, congressional, state and initiative-referendum elections.

"Quality/benefit stressed by ad" coded for the primary information of the ad: the expertise or track record of the advertiser, the superiority or uniqueness of the product, the newness of the service or product, price, and other purposes.

"Reference to a zero-sum game" coded ads for the presence of symbols or words in type thirteen points or larger -- the size of the type you are reading now -- that framed the election as winner-take-all.[15] Ads were coded "Yes" if their display type included the word "win," "winning," "victory," "defeat," "lose," "loss," "get elected," or other phrase suggesting a zero-sum game. Ads without such words, or appropriate words in type obviously smaller than thirteen points, were coded "No." Ads in which the key word was close to thirteen-point type, along with ads in which allusions to a zero-sum game were unclear, were coded as "Unsure/unclear."[16]

Reliability between two journalism graduate student coders on all items for thirty-two ads was 93.75 percent. Repeated attempts failed to raise reliability for "quality/benefit stressed in ad" above 75 percent, and the item, although coded, was dropped from statistical computations and cross-tabulations. Level of significance was set at .05.

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[15] Thirteen-point type was chosen as the smallest display size in accordance with the type selection guidelines in George A. Silver and Myrna L. Silver, ***Layout, Design, and Typography for the Desktop Publisher*** (Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown Publishers, 1991), which states that type sizes above twelve point generally are too large for body copy. Words set in type thirteen points or larger are assumed in this paper to have the impact of headlines and thus indicate emphasis in the advertisement.

[16] Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary defines a zero-sum as "in a system of mathematical analysis, designating or of a situation, competition, etc., in which a gain for one must result in a loss for another or others." An example is a one-dollar wager between two friends on the outcome of a football game. One wins a dollar (plus-one), the other loses a dollar (minus-one), and the sum of the two changes is zero. Technically, many political races are not a zero-sum game because a challenger who fails to unseat an incumbent does not lose his or her job -- merely money and prestige -- while the incumbent who loses does suffer a job loss. "Winner-take-all" might be a more all-inclusive term.

Results:

The most common codeable message of advertisements in the sample involved the sale of computer software.[17] Sixty-four ads peddled software, compared with the second-largest category, hiring a general political consultant, which was found in forty-five ads. In descending order, the next highest categories were "buy a book or reference work," thirty-four; "hire direct mail research/service," twenty-nine; "buy signs, bumper stickers, etc.," twenty-eight; "attend conference," twenty-seven; and "buy a magazine or newsletter," twenty-six. (See Appendix 1.)

When the messages of the advertisements are arranged broadly by subject and the years of publication grouped into three-year periods (see Table 1), some interesting trends emerge.[18]

First, "Gather/use printed information," an indication of the number of ads urging the purchase of information on a printed page, has a marked decline. While it was the most common message of advertisements in 1980-82 and 1983-85 (31.4 percent and 32.3 percent of the total advertising messages, respectively), the purchase of printed information was only the fifth-most-common message in 1992-94. Meanwhile, the advertising emphasis on electronic information, such as computer data bases and the software programs to conduct polls or create targeted direct-mail campaigns, rose from 5.7 percent of total ads in 1980-82 to above 20 percent for the years through 1989-91, before falling to 11.5 percent in 1992-94.

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[17] The computer software category included both general software applications and specialized applications. An example of the former is Aristotle Industries' "Campaign Manager" advertisement of fall 1983, which said the Aristotle system "remembers all donors, thanks all your volunteers, prepares your treasurer's report in compliance with state and federal guidelines, projects your budget, plans your daily scheduling, targets swing precincts, identifies ticket-splitting voters requiring special attention and helps you conduct and analyze your polls." Examples of the latter include the February 1991 "District Analyst" ad for software designed to redraw political boundaries, and a revised version of Aristotle's Campaign Manager ad in October-November 1993 that touted only its campaign finance reporting program. For both ads, see Appendix 2.

[18] Note that "Hire general political consultant," coded as V-07, was included under the broad category of "Hire expertise" on the original coding sheet. After coding, it was made a separate category in order to compare it with the numbers of specialist consultants. Also after coding, "Hire media production assistance" and "Hire firm to tutor candidate" which were not on the original coding sheet, were broken out from "other" as separate categories. These new categories were coded as V-34 and V-35, and then grouped under "Hire special consultant" with categories V-08 through V-17. In addition, the nine corporate image ads were dropped from this table because of their limited number.

Second, the trend of general-vs.-special consultants reveals a fairly constant demand for the specialist. Specialists defined for this study are those whose ads stress one of the following: media consultant, fund-raiser, signature-gatherer (called "petition-gathering firm" on the coding sheet), lobbyist, actor or speaker, poll-taker, phone bank, direct mail researcher, political research firm, media production and candidate tutor.[19] The percentage of ads whose primary message urges the hiring of such a specialist ranges from 20 percent in 1980-82 to 26.2 percent in 1983-85. Ads for the generalist fluctuate much more -- but the percentage of such ads is lower than the specialists' percentage in four of the five three-year periods. The generalists' total fell to 2 percent in 1986-88. Early ads for generalists and specialists tended to be small and plain, such as those found in the "political consultants directory" page of the fall 1982 issue. (See Appendix 2.)

Third, educating the reader to be more self-sufficient remains a fairly constant theme of the advertising. These ads included invitations to apply to graduate-level political science programs at colleges and universities, to attend conferences and seminars on the art of campaigning, and to buy audio tapes of lectures by prominent consultants and video tapes of effective campaign ads from previous races. The percentage of these ads ranged from 9.2 in 1983-85 to 18.2 in 1986-88.

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[19] One advertisement in August 1994 offering to train the candidate in smart use of the media stated, "You have 8 seconds to win or lose in the media." See Appendix 2 for this ad.

Fourth, the rise of the computer and the continued demand for consultants have not come at the expense of many traditional campaign tools, such as yard signs, bumper stickers and buttons. Ads for these channels for political messages were common during the late 1980s. During 1992-94, ads for duplicating and mailing videos to voters helped boost the percentage of "disseminate" information ads to 31.1. Changes in video duplication technology make it possible to make 50,000 lightweight copies of a seven-minute video each day. These messages can reach voters at a rate of about $2 per cassette -- cheaper than buying television network time for a broadcast that many potential voters would miss.[20]

When the 502 ads were coded for the political party and ideology associated with the advertiser -- e.g., ads that said they sought a particular party as a client -- thirty-three ads named Democrats, fifteen named Republicans, one named liberals, five named conservatives, and one each named a Christian and a feminist. Note in Table 2 that in 1989-91, Democratic ads outnumbered Republican ads, thirteen to two. Although the distribution of data in the cells falls short of significance (chi square is 2.11 for a two-by-two table in which 1980-82 is eliminated and the remaining years collapsed into six-year periods), it is interesting to note what appears to be a tilt toward the Democrats, especially in recent years. (See Appendix 2.)

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[20] Andy Meisler, "From Your Mailbox to Your VCR: More Ads," *The New York Times*, October 16, 1994. Oliver North used video duplication in his successful battle for the Republican senatorial nomination in Virginia in 1994, and the American Conservative Union commissioned 157,000 copies of an anti-Clinton health care video in its effort to scuttle the Clinton administration's plan. No ads for CD-ROM distribution of political information were found in this study.

General consultants were nearly evenly split in their stated preference for Democratic or Republican candidates, but specialists targeting Democrats outnumbered specialists targeting Republicans, thirteen to three (Table 3).[21] One ad, in September-October 1986, urged Democrats to "gain the winning edge on your Republican opponents" with a "professional and effective" telephone-based voter contact system.[22] The ad did not say how this system might differ from one aimed at Republican voters. (Appendix 2.)

Few ads targeted specific campaigns, although eight ads stressed the ability of the advertiser to qualify referenda and initiatives for the ballot. The ads that mentioned the presidential and congressional races usually listed the advertiser's success in those races without indicating that the advertiser would be limited to such races. A company that prints lists of voters for mail campaigns, for example, said that in 1988 "we worked for 11 presidential campaigns," yet the ad was targeted to campaigns in the off-year congressional and state races of 1990.[23] (Appendix 2.)

As noted, an examination of the quality/benefit stressed in the ad was hampered by the low intercoder reliability of this item. However, future attempts to codify this item, if successful, should include a new category for "speed," which was emphasized by ads for printing companies promising quick delivery.

Sixty-eight (13.5 percent) of the 502 ads contained the word "win," "winning" or other zero-sum reference in type that was clearly thirteen-point or larger. Table 4 reveals that the percentage of ads containing such a reference climbed from 4.5 in 1980-82, to 21.8 in 1989-91, before falling to 1[illegible] in 1992-94. One ad's headline boasted "95 percent of our clients win!,"[24] and another said in bold type that it "Guaranteed wins." Smaller type beneath that claim said the ad applied to "qualified candidates."[25] (Appendix 2.)

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[21] This table was not subjected to statistical tests such as chi square because of the small numbers of scores.
[22] "Democratic Organizations: You Need the One to One Touch," *Campaigns & Elections*, September-October 1986.
[23] "They Called Him the 'Iron Horse,'" *Campaigns and Elections*, April-May 1990.

The size of the ads yielded no significant observations.

Discussion and conclusions:

The rise of computer software in political consulting and campaigning advertisements in *C&E* in the middle-1980s coincides with the dramatic spread of the personal computer in American business. As the computer columnist for *Campaigns & Elections* noted in 1986, "Since the dawn of the Eighties, it has become apparent that the candidate who best utilizes computers will be more likely to win election. . . . Micro [i.e., personal] computers offer an unprecedented freedom for independent and novice politicians and special interest groups to throw their hats in the ring and make a significant political impact. They make it easier for campaigners to reach more people faster and more cheaply."[26] An example of the impact of personal computer technology is the launching of a 1994 campaign for Massachusetts lieutenant governor in a message sent to potential voters via an online bulletin board service.[27] Both houses of Congress, the Democratic and Republican national committees and various state and federal legislators also use online computer communications systems to reach important audiences.

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[24] "95 Percent of Our Clients Win: Public Office Corporation," *Campaigns & Elections*, September-October 1986.

[25] "Stan-Lyn and Associates," *Campaigns & Elections*, February 1991.

[26] John R. Tkach, "Ballots & Bytes: Dr. Tkach Predicts the Future," *Campaigns & Elections*, May-June 1986, 23, 27.

[27] Barbara Kantrowitz and Debra Rosenberg, "Ready, Teddy? You're Online," *Newsweek*, Sept. 12, 1994, 60-61.

One of the cost-saving effects of computers was in the use of electronic data bases to send direct mail to appropriate targets, as seen in twenty-nine ads that stressed direct mail. Direct mail also was an uncoded secondary consideration in many other ads, including ads for software and electronic data bases that could be used in personal marketing.

The number of direct mail ads illustrates the new importance of this tool, particularly in the wake of the campaign reform legislation of the 1970s and '80s that capped individual contributions at $1,000. Luntz said the reforms had been intended to open the political process and free candidates from the pressures of wealthy contributors.[28] Now, political campaigns seek lots of little contributions instead of fewer large ones. "Political fundraising has become a technician's game, and direct mail has provided the vehicle for obtaining the funds necessary to run a political campaign."[29]

Once new campaign technology began to be used effectively, the proliferation of related advertisements was no surprise. Imitation is more than flattery in politics. "No new item of campaign technology stays dazzling very long," Sabato says. "All consultants in the field grab hold of it, and it becomes standard. One campaign professional saw the process as a kind of political detente: 'Everything neutralizes out. It's just like the U.S. versus Russia: They get a new missile, then we get it, and on and on.'"[30] This also helps explain the continued emphasis on special consulting services being advertised, as well as the development of new specialties. Examples of such new specialties, coded under "other," include a 1986 advertisement in which the consulting firm said it "focuses exclusively on creating favorable perceptions among black voters,"[31] and a 1992 ad that offered the technology for creating "sound bites from the field."[32] (See Appendix 2 for both ads.)

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[28] Luntz, *Candidates, Consultants & Campaigns*, 41.
[29] Ibid., 146.

The reasons are not clear for what appeared to be the tilt toward ads that named Democrats over Republicans. However, an advertisement in the spring 1985 issue offered a clue. It linked the fortunes of the GOP in 1984 to the party's superiority in technology and urged Democrats to play catch-up. "Riding the coattails of a popular incumbent President was an important factor for Republican candidates in 1984, but there was much more to it: Republicans had almost a virtual monopoly over sophisticated campaign technology. 1985 is not 1984," the ad said, before launching into a pitch for a computer software package for Democrats.[33] The next year, a Grass Roots Software Systems advertisement said the company had developed a software called The Election Machine "to enable Democrats to win elections."[34] The ad did not specify how Democratic software differed from Republican software. (Appendix 2.)

However, it is important to note that more than four-fifths of the advertisements in the sample were not targeted toward a particular party or campaign. This reflects the decline of the importance of political parties, that a large majority of advertisers in *C&E* accept business from any candidate who can pay, or that advertisers' associations with particular parties and campaigns are an open secret -- known already by political junkies and therefore not explicitly stated.

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[30] Larry J. Sabato, "Consultant Service: The New Campaign Technology," quoted in Swerdlow, *Media Technology and the Vote*, 183.

[31] "The Nathan Group," *Campaigns & Elections*, September-October 1986.

[32] "R/SVP It," *Campaigns & Elections*, June 1992.

[33] "Politech I: Intelligent Political Software," *Campaigns & Elections*, spring 1985.

[34] "Grass Roots Software Systems," *Campaigns & Elections*, September-October 1986. For an example of a Republican software ad, see "Hannibal: Campaign Software for Microcomputers" in Appendix 2.

It is likely that the emphasis on education in forty-eight ads is linked to the constant competition among consultants and the need to get an edge. U.S. Representative Bill Frenzel, R-Montana, told the *Wall Street Journal* in 1987 that "[w]hat we have now is the survival of the most enthusiastic and the most extreme." His recognition of the need to stay on the front edge of change in campaigning skills echoed comments a year earlier by a White House official in *USA Today*: election strategy requires campaigners to be "first in the field with a machine gun when everyone else is using arrows."[35]

The ads' diversity reflects increased specialization in the consulting field and diversity of products/services to sell, as well as a rise in the number of candidates operating independent of political party organizations.

Surely political consulting is a competitive field, but even so it is difficult to interpret the rise in the percentage of advertising emphasizing the need to win. These advertisements may chart an actual increase in politicians' obsession with winning, or they merely may indicate a psychologically sound advertising approach that competitors feel pressured to imitate. The fact that advertisements are a carefully controlled form of communication, however, suggests a purpose -- not only behind the emphasis on winning, but also in the other variables charted in this paper.

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[35] Both Frenzel and the unnamed White House aide are quoted in Luntz, *Candidates, Consultants & Campaigns*, 41.

APPENDIX 1

I. Case Number ___ ___ ___ (1-3)

II. First TWO WORDS of ad's headline:______________________________

III. Date of publication (last two digits of year) ___ ___ (4-5)

IV. Size of ad, square inches (Round up; full page = 84 inches) ___ ___ (6-7)

V. Primary message of advertisement ___ ___ (8-9)

(GATHER/USE PRINTED INFORMATION)
01. Buy a book or reference work **34**
02. Buy a magazine or newsletter **26**
03. Buy a printed data base (includes mail lists) **18**

(GATHER/USE ELECTRONIC INFORMATION)
04. Buy computer hardware **2**
05. Buy computer software/applications **64**
06. Buy electronic data base **14**

(HIRE EXPERTISE)
07. Hire general political consultant **45**
08. Hire PR firm (must say public relations) **0**
09. Hire media consultant **11**
10. Hire fund-raising firm **12**
11. Hire petition-gathering firm **8**
12. Hire lobbyist **2**
13. Hire actor or speaker **2**
14. Hire polling firm **9**
15. Hire phone bank (firm to call voters) **13**
16. Hire direct mail research/service **29**
17. Hire political research firm (includes opposition research; does not include direct mail) **5**

(DISSEMINATE INFORMATION)
18. Buy envelopes, postcards, labels, etc. **17**
19. Buy signs, bumper stickers, etc. **28**
20. Buy buttons **2**
21. Buy video duplication service **9**
22. Buy video mailers, labels, packaging, etc. **3**

(IMPROVE READER'S EDUCATION)
23. Attend school **6**
24. Attend conference **27**
25. Buy audio tapes (e.g., instructional) **11**
26. Buy video tapes (e.g., instructional) **13**
27. Attend other educational event **1**

(ENJOY POLITICAL RECREATION)
28. Buy political board game **2**
29. Buy political electronic game **3**
30. Buy/collect political memorabilia **1**
31. Buy other recreation **0**

(PROMOTE CORPORATE IMAGE)
32. Ad promotes good will toward advertiser such as NRA, tobacco, etc. **9**

33. OTHER (specify, includes "unknown") ____________________ **60**
34. (Added after initial coding) Hire media production assistance **12**
35. (Added after initial coding) Hire firm to tutor candidate **4**

VI. Party/ideology associated with advertiser (Must be named/specified in ad) ___ (10)
1. Democrat **33**
2. Republican **15**
3. Liberal **1**
4. Conservative **5**
5. Christian **1**
6. Feminist **1**
7. More than one specified **25**
8. Any (none is specified or excluded) **421**

VII. Campaign targeted by ad (Must be named/specified in ad) ___ (11)
1. Presidential **13**
2. Congress **13**
3. U.S. House **3**
4. U.S. Senate **5**
5. State office **3**
6. Referendum **8**
7. More than one specified **30**
8. Any (none is specified or excluded) **427**

VIII. Quality/benefit stressed in ad (if more than one, use first mentioned) ___ (12)
1. Expertise/track record of advertiser (qualities associated with the *people* who placed the ad) **143**
2. Superiority/uniqueness of product (qualities associated with *things* produced by people) **274**
3. *Newness* of company or product (look for words such as "new" or "introducing") **13**
4. Price **32** 5. Unclear/does not apply/other (specify)______________ **34 (Includes "Speed")**

IX. Does display type (type obviously larger than 13 point) contain the word or words ___ (13)
"win," "winning," "victory," "defeat," "lose," "loss," "get elected,"
or other phrase suggesting a zero-sum game? **Yes 68. No 427. Unclear 7.**

TABLE 1

Percentage of Ads in Each of Seven Categories

	Year				
	80-82 *n=35*	83-85 *n=65*	86-88 *n=99*	89-91 *n=112*	92-94 *n=122*
Gather/use printed information	31.4	32.3	19.2	13.4	9.8
Gather/use electronic information	5.7	29.2	22.2	20.5	11.5
Hire general consultant	28.6	3.1	2.0	18.8	8.2
Hire special consultant	20.0	26.2	24.2	25.0	25.4
Disseminate/ Buy channel for message	--	--	12.1	8.0	31.1
Educate the reader	14.3	9.2	18.2	12.5	12.3
Political recreation	--	--	2.0	1.8	1.6

Columns total 100%, but 69 ads were excluded because their message was unclear or outside these catetories.

TABLE 2
Number of Ads Mentioning Party*

Year

	80-82	83-85	86-88	89-91	92-94
Democrats	1	2	8	13	9
Liberals				*1*	
Republicans	--	3	5	2	5
Conservatives	*1*	*1*	*2*		*1*

*References to "liberal" or "conservative" are indicated by italic numbers in the lower right-hand corner of the cell. If Republicans and conservatives are collapsed into one group and Democrats and liberals into another -- an arguably imperfect generalization -- and the years are collapsed to form a two-by-two table, then Table 2 has a chi square value just below the significance level at 0.05 probability. (x2 = 3.82; df = 1.)

TABLE 3
Number of Ads Mentioning Party, Coded by Category

	Print	Electronic	General consult	Special consult
Democrats	1	10	6	13
Republicans	2	4	5	3

TABLE 4

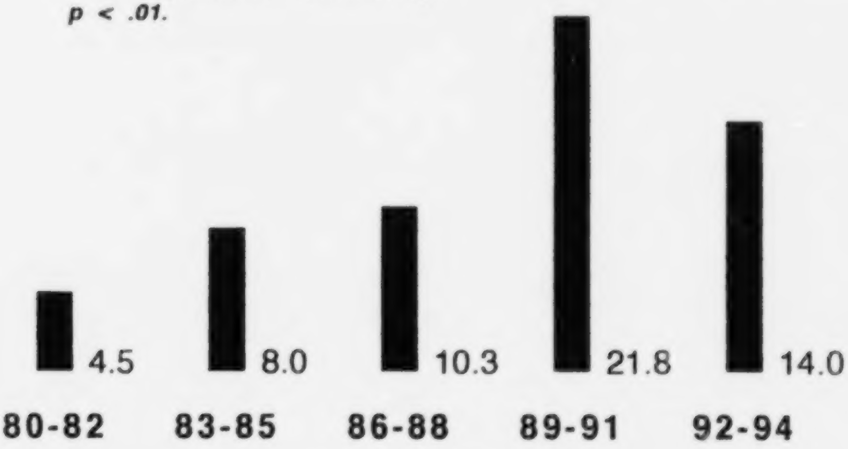
Percentage of Ads Containing Headlines Referring to Winning or Losing, or Other References to a Zero-Sum Game

Year

	80-82 *n=44*	83-85 *n=75*	86-88 *n=107*	89-91 *n=133*	92-94 *n=143*	Total *n=502*
Zero sum	4.5	8.0	10.3	21.8	14.0	13.5
No zero sum	95.5	92.0	87.8	77.4	83.2	85.1
Unclear	--	--	1.9	0.8	2.8	1.4

Chi square is 13.68;
df = 4 ("unclear" eliminated);
p < .01.

Columns total 100%



Percentage of ads containing zero-sum reference

APPENDIX 2:

SELECTED ADS FROM CAMPAIGNS AND ELECTIONS IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

CAMPAIGNS & ELECTIONS
POLITICAL CONSULTANT DIRECTORY

PROCESS CONSULTANTS CO.
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KENT, OHIO 44240
(216) 374-7464

Deanna Kay Skolfield
DEANNA KAY SKOLFIELD Ph D

---

research/analysis corporation

Brad Bannon
Project Director for Political Polls

1616 Soldiers Field Road
Boston, MA 02135
(617) 783-1701

VOTER CONTACT/CALIFORNIA

Shellie Garrett

1084 Skyline Drive Daly City, California 94015 415/994-6462

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President

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Albuquerque, New Mexico 87108 (505) 265-6434

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WILLIAMSVILLE, N.Y. 14221
PHONE
716 632-0369

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Political/Computer Consultant

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— George Jepson
Campaign Manager

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— Kent Syler
Campaign Manager

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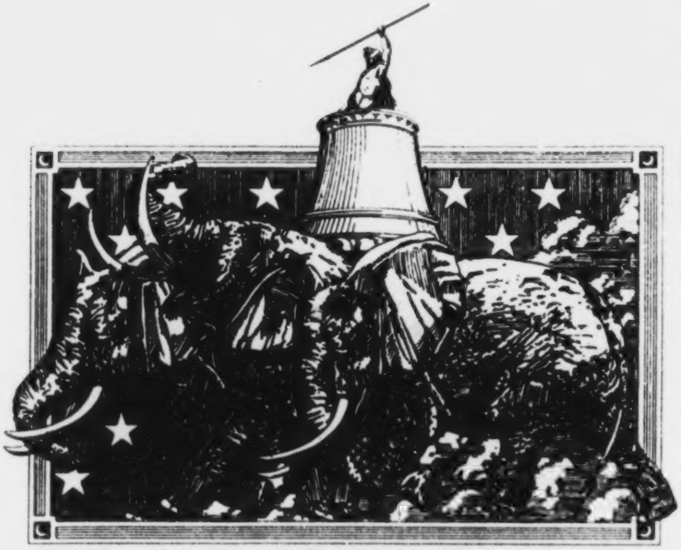

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Sept.-Oct. 86

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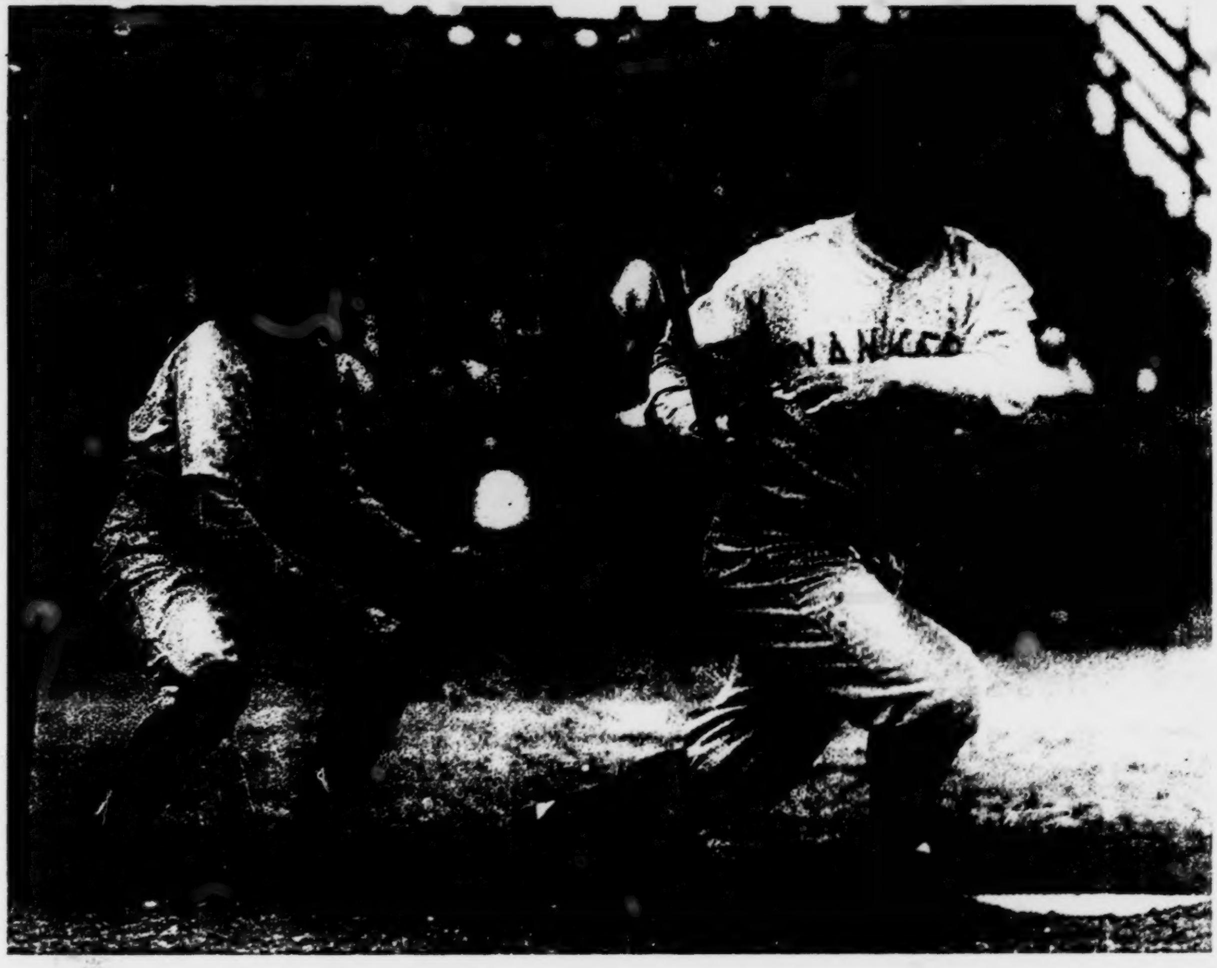

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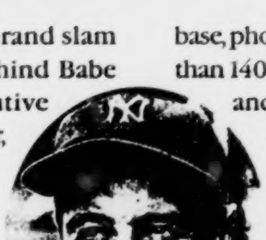

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"DULL, BORING."

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"LIKE WATCHING PAINT DRY."

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"★"

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PC MAGAZINE

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No one else does this.

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FEC
COMPLIANCE

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ARISTOTLE

power tools for campaigners

From *Seventeen* to *Sassy*:
Teen Magazines and the Construction of the "Model" Girl

by
Lisa Duke
Doctoral Student

University of Georgia
School of Journalism & Mass Communication
Athens, GA 30602
(404) 682-9439 e-mail: dukel@uga.cc.uga.edu

From *Seventeen* to *Sassy*:
Teen Magazines and the Construction of the "Model" Girl

> Rita: Are all the girls you interview pretty?
> ...Like...the girls in here (magazine).
> Duke: ...Why did you ask me that?
> R: Well, 'cause I mean...if they were to interview somebody in here (magazine), they'd be really pretty and I don't know, have a dumb personality or something. I don't know. I just asked you that because, uhm, because magazines, they basically like Cindy Crawford and stuff. And you're just starting or something, so it doesn't really matter, right?
>
> *-From November 1993 Interview*

Psychologists have called girls' transition from childhood to adolescence the "flight to femininity," a reference to the way in which appearance becomes paramount in the early teen years (Beal, 1994, p. 244). It is commonly believed that teen magazines play an important role in socializing girls into "femininity" (e.g., Peirce, 1993). This assertion, while seemingly self-evident, nonetheless is based on little more than supposition. A review of the literature on teenage girls and their magazines revealed little empirical evidence to support this claim. Further, while there have been numerous content analyses of magazines targeted to teenage girls and women, researchers rarely have inquired into the *teenager's interpretations* of what she read.

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether the advertising and editorial content of teen magazines influenced the processes by which girls became "feminine." This question was approached through in-depth interviews with 12- and 13-year-old girls who were regular readers of teen magazines. By qualitatively assessing girls' interpretations of the textual conventions of femininity, it is hoped that a new dimension of understanding can be added to the more prevalent quantitative data on teenage girls, their magazines, and the advertising directed towards them.

My inquiry was based on five premises. Each will be discussed more fully in the sections which follow.

> 1. Femininity is a social construction which is culturally defined and historically delineated.
>
> 2. The traditional American feminine "role" has four components (Fiebert, 1990, pp. 633-634) -- adherence to fashion and beauty standards, performance of family and domestic skills, meeting the needs of others, and acquisition of male attention. Historically, the components have shifted in emphasis as women aged. However, in contemporary American society, it may be that the components of fashion and beauty remain the most important throughout a woman's lifetime (Bartky, 1990).
>
> 3. Adolescence is a critical stage for incorporation, modification, or rejection of traditional notions of femininity.
>
> 4. Media play a role in organizing the adolescent female's relationship to the dominant culture's gender standards.
>
> 5. The nature of the media's role can be partially revealed by girls' interpretations of mediated messages which are targeted to them. (Unconscious and long-term effects, however, cannot be accounted for in this way.)

Femininity as Social Construction

The notion that femininity is a "social construction" coincides with the relatively recent differentiation between the biological circumstance of sex and the cultural construct of gender. This distinction has formed the basis for a reevaluation of the way researchers have traditionally studied females. It is now of questionable scientific merit to attribute particular behaviors and personality traits to people solely on the basis of sex, for example, to assume that females are, by nature, nurturing. Contemporary researchers have become sensitive to the idea that a correlation between the female sex and behavior varies according to historical, social, and cultural contexts. In this regard, feminist scholars have differentiated "subjectivity" from "individuality," with the former being "a sense of identity which is socially constructed...in contrast to individuality, which is a product of nature or biology" (Gilbert and Taylor, 1991, p. 24). Furthermore, these scholars have shown an increased interest in the ways in which the media, as part of a historical, social, and cultural context, may help to construct females' subjectivity.

Concepts of femininity have not historically been applied in the same way (or with the same effect) to *all* women, yet all women living in patriarchal societies have been affected by them. The contemporary formulation of ideal femininity theorized by Bartky (1990) focuses on a patriarchally defined, "chronically imperfect" feminine form for which all females are held accountable:

> The larger disciplines that construct a "feminine" body out of a female one are by no means race- or class-specific. There is little evidence that women of color or working-class women are...less committed to the incarnation of ideal femininity than their more privileged sisters...(all) are aiming at the same general result (p. 72).

Although feminist scholars have helped change the way science views the sexes, feminism has apparently had little impact on the media's stereotypical portrayals of women and men (Unger and Crawford, 1992, p. 120). Similarly, feminists have difficulty in swaying the public's perceptions of the sexes; gender stereotypes have shown little change over the last 30 years (p. 138). Traditional notions of femininity are still the norm in advertising, popular media forms and in people's minds, if not in reality.

Bartky (1990) has said it is no longer the reprobation of others which is the primary source of contemporary woman's oppression, but internalized negative assessments of self. In her scenario, a narcissistic obsession with the physical replaces women's former obsession with "home and hearth":

> Women are no longer required to be chaste or modest, to restrict their sphere of activity to the home, or even to realize their properly feminine destiny in maternity: Normative femininity is coming more and more to be centered on woman's body...There is...nothing new about preoccupation with beauty. What is new is the growing power of the image in a society increasingly oriented toward the visual media...What was formerly the specialty of the aristocrat or courtesan is now the routine obligation of every woman, be she a grandmother or barely pubescent girl (p. 80).

The shift in the feminine ideal, from "wife and mother" to eternally youthful and male-accessible "beauty," is one which may be an easier "sell" to contemporary women and girls who desire autonomy and financial independence. By framing physical attractiveness in ways which appeal to an American ideal -- that through hard work and the proper investment of resources in "tools" and magazine advice, anyone can be successful -- the media have tapped into a formula difficult for most women to resist. Thus, the producers of contemporary media images and those who underwrite their activities have a vested interest in maintaining non-normative female images as the norm, and strongly influence society's concepts of femininity. Teen magazines, with their emphasis on makeup, hair, weight, and clothes, are natural vehicles for indoctrinating adolescent girls into the ideals of Bartky's "new femininity," i.e., that to look young, to be thin, and eternally (hetero)sexually attractive is to be female.

Early Adolescence and Identity Formation

The scope of this inquiry was restricted to girls in early adolescence, ages 12-13. The importance of these years in the formation of girls' self-concepts was brought to the fore by Lyn Mikel Brown and Carol Gilligan (1992). From 1986-1990, the researchers interviewed just under 100 girls, ages 7-18, at Cleveland's Laurel School for Girls. Their results showed that at the crucial milestone of early adolescence, girls began to censor what they thought and felt with a voice which originated in social authorities such as parents and teachers, but which girls often failed to distinguish from their own. Not only did girls at this age strive to achieve the American formulation of an ideal feminine "look," they also began to internalize cultural prescriptions for acceptable feminine behavior, one aspect of which was identified by Brown and Gilligan as "the tyranny of the nice and kind." Girls learned that being "nice," having the right look, fitting in, and recognizing subtle social cues were vital to acceptance by others. At the same time, ironically, confidence levels among the majority of girls this age plummeted. The researchers observed that "While some girls wonder how a perfect girl could be possible, much less desirable, and how adults and other girls could fall for what they see as clearly fraudulent, other girls seem transfixed by the idea of her. Poised at the edge and suspecting that people prefer the 'perfect' girl to the real one, these girls experiment with her image and the protection and security and happiness she promises" (p. 100).

While it is possible for girls to maintain strong self-concepts and interact with popular magazine texts with varying degrees of accommodation, Smith (1988) observed that "participation in the discourse of femininity is also a practical relation of a woman (girl) to herself as an object...she becomes the object of her project of realizing the textually defined idea" (p. 48-49). That is, just as little girls are socialized to play with paper dolls, placing cut-out facades of hair, dress, and gesture over the "real" dolls, so too might adolescent girls be moved to mentally fit magazine images over their true self-images. Strategies for "fitting in" and developing attractiveness are especially important to girls in early adolescence when dramatic physical changes contribute to increased self-consciousness and loss of confidence (Beal, 1994). Evans (1991) showed that girls in early adolescence reported a more careful and complete reading of teen magazines than did older girls. The images presented through the advertising and editorial of the four most popular teen magazines -- *Seventeen*, *YM*, *Teen*, and *Sassy* -- are unrelentingly idealized, and a large portion of the content is devoted to "how-to" ads and articles on self-improvement, developing interpersonal skills, and enhancing attractiveness through the latest makeup, clothing and hair styles (Evans, 1991).

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Adolescent Femininity as Discourse

Researchers working within the tradition of British Cultural Studies (e.g. Hebdige, 1979) have focused on qualitative inquiries into the ways in which groups outside the dominant order (such as British "mods" and "teddy boys") locate themselves in society and seek to modify the organization of "cultural power" (Hall, 1976, p. 10). Working within a Marxist tradition, British Cultural Studies researchers have used social class as their dominant mode of analysis. However, the group's early works studied male "subcultures" almost exclusively (Press, 1991, p. 20). In 1978, the Women's Studies Group was organized by British Cultural Studies scholars such as McRobbie and Garber (1976) who sought to fill the knowledge gap that existed on the culture of women and girls. In the 1980s, the interdisciplinary studies initiated by these and other feminist re-searchers helped illuminate the ways in which notions of femininity are socially constructed and partially maintained through popular texts (Schwichtenberg, 1992). These works focused on media targeted primarily to women (e.g., romance novels, soap operas, and teen magazines) and described some of the ways in which select groups of English and American women negotiated and/or internalized the gender roles of their cultures (e.g. Radway, 1984; Modleski, 1982). Of particular interest here is McRobbie's (1978) "*Jackie*: *An ideology of adolescent femininity*." McRobbie's work was a qualitative content analysis and semiological study of *Jackie* a best-selling girls' magazine in Great Britain. Informed by Marxist-feminist theories, McRobbie identified textual conventions in the magazine which she said were used to "shape the consent of the readers to a set of particular values" (p. 2). These values were believed to be encoded into the text and represented an ideology of femininity which manipulated girls through the "codes" of romance, personal and domestic life, fashion and beauty, and pop music (p. 36). She observed that magazines geared to successive age groups of women -- from early adolescence through middle-age -- provided scripts which "spelled out" a woman's evolving role in society. *Jackie* addressed all girls within its target group as undifferentiated; all were presumed to share the same goals, concerns and desires. As a result of the way *Jackie* claimed to define the interests of all girls ages 10-14 within narrow and predictable boundaries, McRobbie concluded that *Jackie* created false "norms" of female adolescence that were adhered to by readers of the magazine -- i.e., adolescent girls were competitive with other girls for the attention of boys. Although McRobbie allowed that female teens had access to a number of conduits of ideological messages, she believed that through their magazines, girls were "...presented with an ideological bloc of mammoth proportions, one which imprisons them in a ...world of jealousy and competitiveness" (p. 3).

By instructing its readers to spend free time in the pursuit of artful personal grooming, self-improvement, boys, and consumer goods, *Jackie* provided invaluable training for what McRobbie foresaw in 1978 as girls' probable and unenviable fates as housewives (p. 42). Fifteen years later, Evans, Rutberg, Sather, and Turner (1991) came to similar conclusions in their content analysis of American teen magazines *Sassy*, *Seventeen* and *YM*. They found that "articles and advertisements mutually reinforced an underlying value that the road to happiness is attracting males for successful heterosexual life by way of physical beautification" (p. 110).

Frazer (1987), whose study of *Jackie* followed McRobbie's by almost 10 years, carried out what she believed to be the first work in which *Jackie*'s teen readers were asked about the meanings they took from the magazine. The results led her to take exception to the passive reader implied by McRobbie. Frazer rejected McRobbie's assumption that behind the "mask" of ideology, there was one "true" way to read a text. Instead, she argued that girls interacted with the text and with others to create meanings, and that these meanings shifted and were modified according to the contexts in which the meanings were elicited. Although the data analyses in Frazer's article were sparse and preliminary, she claimed her participants demonstrated a naturally "self-conscious and reflexive approach" (pg. 419) to the text, which she felt diluted any ideological effect which might be encoded therein.

Evans (1990) reported a study in which 147 white, middle-class high school girls completed self-report questionnaires on their teen-magazine reading patterns and their perceptions of those magazines' influence on their behavior. Evans reported greater use of the magazines among younger high school girls than among older girls. Younger girls also showed more interest than older girls in the advice columns and articles on prosocial behavior. In an open-ended section of the questionnaire, girls said they would like to change their magazine by increasing emphasis on "real" people, decreasing coverage of celebrities, and featuring a less homogeneous-looking group of models.

Published work on girls and the magazines they read is limited. With the exception of Frazer (1987) and McRobbie (1978), the only additional research found was based on content analyses (Peirce, 1990; Evans et al. 1991; Peirce, 1993).

Media Effects on Girls

The question of media's ability to influence perception and behavior, and the degree of any effect, is a topic of continued debate. Most of the work seeking to establish media effects has focused on short-term effects, e.g., Myers and Biocca (1992). Perhaps the best-known research attempting to establish long-term effects has been the work of Gerbner (1976, 1982) in support of his "cultivation hypothesis." The process cultivation seeks to explain is complex and subject to the difficulties inherent in demonstrating cohesive media effects across vastly different groups of people. Ultimately, it is questionable whether any "grand" communication theory can be devised which adequately accounts for individual and cultural differences in the reception of media content which in itself is varied and capable of communicating a multiplicity of complex and often-conflicting meanings.

Frazer (1987) built on the concept of a negotiated position in her discussion of discourse registers. In analyzing transcripts of girl groups discussing a story from *Jackie*, Frazer noted that girls changed discourse registers as they deemed appropriate in given situations. Hence, girls not only negotiated the meaning they took from the text, they also negotiated the ways in which they expressed their interpretations in relation to specific social situations. As Frazer observed, "discourse registers both *constrain* what is sayable in any context, and *enable* saying" (p. 421, original emphasis).

Peirce (1993) maintained that the degree to which girls internalize gendered media messages could be determined by the level of their dependency on the medium. "Dependency theory" suggests that in times of great change or social upheaval, the media's power to influence perception increases, particularly in those cases when the media are essential to the smooth running of society. The relative importance of a medium for relaying information within the social system, and the varying degrees in which individuals became accustomed to using media for information, combined to determine the media effect (Severin and Tankard, 1992, p. 263).

Recognizing "girl culture" as operating as an insular society unto itself, marginal even to the male subcultures (McRobbie and Garber, 1976), dependency theory may have a contribution to make to our understanding of how adolescent females use of targeted advertising and media. Early adolescence is a tumultuous life phase; girls are seeking to confirm their identities (Erikson, 1959, p. 23) at the same time they are experiencing diminished levels of confidence (Brown and Gilligan, 1992). Evans (1990) noted in his study of high school girls that it was the younger girls who indicated greatest use of and influence by teen magazines. This may be because the magazines are among the few information sources targeted to adolescent girls that expressly and explicitly address their new, growing concerns about how to look, behave, solve problems, and attract boys.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Research Design

Using McCracken's (1991) *The Long Interview* as a guide, I conducted a series of one-and-a-half to two-hour individual interviews with ten girl readers of teen magazines, age 12-13, over a three-month period. (McCracken (1991) and Crabtree and Miller (1992) indicate that in qualitative efforts such as this one, six to eight informants are generally considered sufficient for in-depth concept exploration within homogeneous groups.) I recruited additional participants and continued interviewing until additional data yielded no new results -- Lincoln and Guba's (1985) concept of "redundancy" (p. 202).

Participant Selection

Girls in early adolescence, ages 12-13, who were regular readers (six or more times a year) of *Seventeen*, *Sassy*, *YM* or *Teen* were selected via a snowball method. I did not know the girls prior to undertaking this research, and no familiarity existed across the three groups of girls from different towns. I chose a snowball selection strategy for two reasons: it allowed me to explore in greater detail how the magazine was used between friends in relationship work, and made it possible for me to interview girls in their homes, rather than in a school or club location. This was important because girls needed to feel free to speak at length on issues which they might feel uncomfortable discussing in the immediate vicinity of peers. In all but one case, interviews in each town were scheduled back-to-back so the girls would have less opportunity to talk before their interviews. With one exception, a Korean girl from a middle-class family, all of the girls I interviewed were Caucasian and middle-class, reflecting the majority of the magazines' readership. Girls were recruited from the suburbs of two southern cities (groups one and two) and from one major northern metropolitan area (group three). I remain mindful that despite the importance of understanding the role of gender in the lives of women and girls, it is just one of many factors which construct individual feminine identities. Race, ethnic background, class, and sexual orientation may play equally important roles in the lives of girls.

Choosing the Magazines

In my initial design, I intended to focus on the most widely read magazine for girls and young women, *Seventeen (1993 Media Encyclopedia Magazine Directory).* In subsequent interviews with participants, girls indicated that though they may read a variety of magazines, including *Seventeen*, they had a marked preference for one; *Seventeen* was not always their first choice. Since the most popular, nationally distributed teen magazines targeted to girls, specifically *'Teen*, *Seventeen*, *YM*, and *Sassy*, had relatively similar and consistent content, the research design was altered to accommodate discussion of the magazine of a girl's choice. This allowed for exploration of how girls judged the similarity of magazines, and how they chose one magazine over another.

Evans et al. (1991) identified two categories of magazines marketed specifically to adolescent girls. One, typically described as a fan magazine, focuses on teen celebrities, usually male. Advertising support for these vehicles is limited, and issues are usually purchased individually. The other category is a slick, subscription-driven magazine dependent on advertiser revenue. These publications purport to address the interests and informational needs of teenage girls. Among the best-known and most widely read of these are *Seventeen*, *'Teen*, *YM*, and *Sassy*.

These four magazines have remarkably similar content, despite the fact that each has a different publisher. In their analysis of 30 issues of *Seventeen*, *Sassy* and *YM* drawn from the years 1989-1990, Evans et al. (1991) found that fashion was the number-one topic in all three, followed (in order) by feature articles, articles on beauty, and entertainment (p. 104). The most prevalent identity-related theme of articles, interpersonal relationships (male/female dating relationships and peer relations), was also consistent within and between magazines (pp. 104-105). Models depicted in *Seventeen*, *Sassy* and *YM* were fairly homogeneous. Sixty-five percent were white females, and depictions of white *males* outnumbered depictions of nonwhite females by more than three to one (Evans et al., 1991). Taken individually or as a group, these four magazines present clear and coherent messages about what it means to be a young American female. Although teen magazines represent only one type of socializing influence in the lives of girls, the magazines are unique in that they are an enduring source of ideas, values, and information dedicated specifically to young women.

Seventeen is America's most popular magazine for girls and young women age 12-24, with a circulation of 1.9 million (*1993 Media Encyclopedia Magazine Directory*). It was first published in 1944, and according to one reviewer, features traditional content that "favors consistency over radical departures" (Poole, 1990, p. 132). *'Teen* has an approximate circulation of 1.19 million. The magazine makes no pretense of addressing the difficult issues confronting adolescent girls. The *1993 Bacon's Magazine Directory* profile of *'Teen* said it was "written for today's fashion-conscious youth by stressing coverage on fashion and beauty ideas." The fastest-growing of the mainstream magazines targeted to girls ages 12-19, *YM*'s circulation jumped a phenomenal 27% in 1993, with paid circulations increasing from 1.3 million to 1.7 million (*Adweek*, February 28, 1994, p. 22). *Sassy* was launched in 1988, and with its first issue, announced its intention to address "hot" issues such as premarital sex and homosexuality. In the wake of negative response from some parents and advertisers, the magazine modified its outspoken stance until it was hardly distinguishable from its competitors (Poole, 1990, p. 131). *Sassy* targets girls ages 14-19; its circulation is approximately 715,000.

Interview Format

The format of the interviews was "semistandardized" (Berg, 1989); a set of questions was formulated to be used as a guide to ensure I covered certain concepts, however, the interview process accommodated new directions and ideas as they were introduced or elaborated upon by the participants. After agreeing to participate in this study, girls were provided with money to purchase the teen magazine of their choice, which they were asked to read before their scheduled interviews. The magazine was used as a stimulus device during the interview, a technique called "auto-driving." Auto-driving requires that participants be provided with photographs, music, text, or video as prompts for their interpretations (McCracken, 1988, p. 36). Through the use of this technique, girls could provide more vivid interpretations of the teen magazine text, and use the magazine to strengthen descriptions of their reading experiences.

Each interview began with a request that served the purpose of a "grand tour" question (Crabtree and Miller, 1992, p. 81), "Tell me, and show me, how you read this magazine." This allowed the participant to talk at length, with the magazine serving as a prompt. Although an interview guide was used, the conversation flowed naturally and the guide was used only to ensure all critical issues were covered.

An interview necessarily puts the participant in a more critical frame of mind than she would be in when reading on her own. Thus, girls were not pressed for interpretations as they "read" the magazine during the interview. They simply noted what they read, and what it meant to them. As advertising, articles, or photographs were skipped, I would occasionally ask a girl why -- the usual answer was she simply was not interested in the material. With most of the girls, a pattern would emerge -- one girl had no interest in fashion advertising because she felt the clothes were outlandish and irrelevant to her life; another, an admitted non-reader, would not look at text that extended more than half a column down a page. Admittedly, items which were skipped for no discernible reason were also meaningful. For this study, however, there was no practical way to engage participants on subjects in which they had no interest without placing them into a hyper-analytical mind set, and perhaps forcing "answers" for questions that were not truly answerable on a conscious level.

Analysis

After transcribing tapes of participant interviews, I used Lincoln and Guba's (1985) method of unitizing and categorizing data to establish emergent themes and organizing constructs. Transcripts were examined for instances of language, descriptions of content, particular uses of text, and "units of information" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 344) that would next be grouped into categories (e.g., self-expression through artifice). These units were assigned to colored folders labeled with the broad categories described by the units within. Units were edited both before and after categorization to ensure that each met Lincoln and Guba's criteria of making a direct contribution to the research task at hand, and contained within itself clear meaning without necessitating undue explanation.

Using a variation of constant comparison (p. 347), units were examined individually and sorted into sets. In the initial stages of analysis, set descriptors were concrete: e.g., voices of authority, fashion. Then I established the abstract functions girls associated with these topics; for instance, the girls' focus on brand names helped them to socially situate other girls within their group. Analysis was complete when all data were categorized or deemed irrelevant, categories were saturated with compelling data instances, emergent patterns and regularities were identified, and I determined that additional analysis would not contribute significantly to the findings (p. 350). I acknowledge that the data presented in this study is colored by my life experiences, perceptions, and biases. I make no pretense of being able to offer a completely objective view of the realities these participants have described, but have attempted to analyze my findings in a systematic fashion, and have corroborated my results with participants.

Adolescent Femininity in the 1990s

Girls' Perceptions of the Textual Ideal

In an effort to elicit a description of the **archetypal textual image** of femininity from the girls, I asked them to imagine I had opened their favorite teen magazine to a randomly chosen page, and that there was a girl on that page. Their task was to describe that girl. The responses were strikingly similar:

> Zena: She's probably real pretty like blonde, long hair. ...Real pretty eyes. Skinny. Tall.
>
> Rita: ...*Blonde*, of course...I guess guys get a bigger kick out of blondes than they do brunettes or black-headed women or redheads.

> Karen: She's probably have on clothes that were in like in style and she'd have pretty hair and a nice profile.

Karen's remark about the feminine ideal having a "nice profile" seemed unusual until, while reading with Abby, we ran across another model search. In this search, girls were chosen as winners on the basis of a single feature. 'Best profile' was one of the categories. Other girls had studied this section as well, but Abby's comments were typical:

> Abby: They have grand, first, second, and third prize...they have the perfect eyes, the perfect profile and smile and everything.
> Duke: ...And what is a perfect profile?
> A: A chiseled profile...defined. ...I don't know. *Like hers* (the contest winner).
> D: And perfect skin is...
> A: Perfect. No zits. Nothing. Of course, that's totally unrealistic. Of course, *they* don't. But, so I hate 'em. (laugh) And the perfect smile is...lovely white teeth and you know, the heart-shaped mouth...So, that's annoying. (A. wears braces.)

It seems that through text which **teaches the girls to mentally dissect themselves into individually perfectable parts**, girls fail to view themselves as one acceptable whole. Even if the rest of the body complies to the ideal, there is always the nose to be fixed, the eyes that could be larger, the hair that should be longer. Hence, a girls' beautification work is never done.

While McRobbie (1978) tended to focus on the "style and artifice" of feminine beauty in her reading of *Jackie*, the concerns of the girls in my study were more closely linked to Bartky's (1990) observations regarding the physical emphasis of femaleness. Particularly apt in this regard is Bartky's observation that "All the projections of the fashion-beauty complex have this in common. **They are images of *what I am not*** (p. 40)."

In terms of body image, this "excluding ideal" was verbalized by girls who acknowledged that the images portrayed in ads and articles represented girls older than themselves. While on the one hand, participants acknowledged their desire to attain or maintain a fashionably slender build, they reconciled themselves to the fact that the requisite bustline of the true ideal, the "hot body," could not *yet* be theirs. The magazines' standards for the ideal feminine physique are evident to all the girls I spoke to, and to a great extent, they are the standards the girls have set for themselves and other girls:

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> Cara: ...If I have a friend over and if we're getting ready for a party, the first thing we ask each other is how we look and do we look fat...All the girls in that magazine are skinny. They're probably all a size 2 or a size 4. And I'm sure they all worry about their weight at some time, but they're all skinny. ...Most of them are, basically have a perfect figure.

Girls couldn't will themselves to be taller, or to have perfect features or clear skin. The one thing they thought they could control was their weight. The food articles that attracted them focused on caloric counts and fat content. Eating healthy foods was the goal they say they set for themselves, but upon reflection, they allowed that eating "thin" was the more powerful motivator. **The ideal figure is seen as "skinny" with a well-developed bust, an extremely rare body shape** in adolescent girls, as well as the general population of women.

Girls are **aware that the images presented in the magazines do not represent the female norm**, even in cases when the images are not of models, but of "everyday" girls who enter the "model searches" periodically featured in the magazines. Abby describes the kind of girl she thinks the magazine solicited for entry into an advertiser-sponsored contest:

> Abby: ...I would say (pause) your every-day, all-American next-door-neighbor type of thing, but they didn't pick them. Their girls are...real pretty. Tall. Thin...If you're looking for the girl-next-door, these aren't it. Sorry. Then they make 'em seem like it by you know, putting pigtails and the bandannas and stuff...

The consistency of the images girls see from month to month was highlighted by this discussion with Zena, who got very excited describing an atypical model in the previous months' issue. In the issue we were examining, this model had become the topic of a spate of letters from girls who were moved to comment on this model's unusual look. The fact that she was featured in the magazine seemed to have the effect of redefining Zena's concept of beauty:

> Zena: You see models with like blonde, flowing hair. Her hair was shorter...and it was like, brown, really pale skin, rosy cheeks. .She was different- looking. But I thought she was really pretty. ***But..I would never have imagined her being pretty.*** Compared to like...these girls (models in current issue; emphasis added).

When asked how they would improve the teen magazines they read, girls said they'd like to see more images of "non-models" included-- meaning "more girls like me." **When any female**

image deviated from the expected standards of attractiveness, however, girls were quick to call it "ugly" or were perplexed by its presence.

Comparison

> Duke: If you could change one thing, what would it be?
> Rayna: Probably my skin. I don't like my skin. I don't like it. And my hair. I don't like my hair. And my nose. I don't like my nose. It's too big. I'm getting a nose job when I get older.

In adolescence, girls focus on their looks, clothes, and weight as they never have before, with good reason: evidence shows that at this age, a female's popularity with her peers is closely linked to her appearance (Adler, Kless, and Adler cited in Beal, 1994). **While girls felt free to state that they felt *other* girls compared themselves to the models in the magazines, they stopped short of saying that they themselves did this.** In an effort to get at the substance of this issue in another way, I asked Zena if she would rather be one of the models in the ads, or be one of the model's best friends:

> Zena: Being one of these girls! I wouldn't want to be their best friend because then I'd be...people would always be comparing me to her and she would be the prettier one and stuff. Yeah, she'd be the prettier one and I wouldn't want to be looked at as, like, just like the girl who follows her around everywhere. And the sidekick. The uglier one. The one with the uglier body or whatever. I'd rather be one of them.

"Feminine beauty" is held up as an ideal for which girls are to strive, but in terms of the images in their magazines, it is a ideal which few girls can ever hope to attain. Falling short of the ideal is practically assured by adolescence, with its hormonal rushes, body parts which refuse to grow in synch, and the ever-present images of somewhat older girls who apparently never knew the awkwardness which befell everyone else. Participants seemed to be learning to suppress ego, to apologize for finding anything positive in their own appearance, to invalidate their own authority in this judgment by citing the opinions of others, yet looked on the exceptional beauty of magazine models as somewhat suspect. **Any girl who has a look so coveted by others might be interpersonally flawed -- she makes other girls feel bad.** Rita tells me how her friends compare to the magazine models:

> Rita: Mmmm, [they are] VERY different. Not all my friends are beautiful and...some of them are very serious and smart. (The magazine models) don't look very bright. ...Like their brains have been fried by too many curlers. And THAT girl looks like...a mean person. ...Just the way she's smiling. It's major fake.

Karen said of a magazine model "she wouldn't have to be outgoing or even nice," and that even though you really can't tell anything about someone by looking at them, she said, you also can't tell anything about them by what is written in the magazine: "Even if she says something in the magazine, that could be something written for her."

There seems to be a conflict in the socialization of girls to get along with and encourage others, to cultivate and nurture same sex friendships, and at the same time, develop the self-focus encouraged by the beauty images of teen magazines. It is a conflict none of the girls seemed equipped to reconcile.

Created Beauty: Cosmetics and Girls

While on the one hand exhorting girls to "be themselves," girls' magazines simultaneously illustrate the necessity for their advice on alteration should *the self* deviate from a fashionable ideal. These magazines regularly feature articles and advertorials which describe types and brands of cosmetics, along with application techniques. Recent examples include "No Mistake Makeup...Simple steps for eyes, cheeks and lips that'll add up to a prettier you" (*'Teen*, November 1993) and "Beauty Workshop...Beauty 911: A bad hair day? No-so-perfect skin? Fix those flaws fast." (*Seventeen*, November 1993). The structure of this material is frequently problem/ solution, as in "To avoid blotchy blush, apply translucent powder before putting on powder blush" (*'Teen*, November 1993, p. 75) and "Is your Cupid's bow on the thin side? Using a dark lipliner, trace just the outside of your lips..." (*YM*, November, 1993, p. 36). This formula neatly informs the girl of problems she may heretofore not even have known existed -- in this way, the magazine can contribute to feelings of inadequacy. The girl is apprised of the magazine's standard for attractive lips (not "thin") as she is instructed on the use of cosmetics for correcting her "flaws."

Of McRobbie's (1978) four codes of femininity -- romance, personal and domestic life, fashion and beauty, and pop music (p. 36) -- only her reading of fashion and beauty in the teen magazine text seemed to resonate in these girl's interpretations. In fact, McRobbie's observations of the styles of the day sound oddly contemporary:

> ...The model's beauty here is predicated upon her 'natural' good looks. At the same time the reader recognizes that this 'naturalness' is in itself a 'lie'. It is rather the result of applying make-up in a certain subtle way...to make her more desirable and hide her 'natural' flaws (p. 38).

Girls were aware of the most popular color palette being pushed by all the magazines, the once-again-trendy "natural" selection based on warm tones. The girls I spoke to had accepted this "natural" palette as the one with which they felt most comfortable, but they indicated little interest in the fine points of cosmetic application. In general, the **girls seemed to view makeup as a necessity in their "age of acne," but showed little interest in ads and articles concerning cosmetics.**

> **Cara**: ...'Cause I don't have the most great complexion and makeup does a lot, I mean it covers up a bunch and, but I also wear it 'cause I just think that a little bit of makeup makes you look...better... I don't really wear it just to wear it...I wear it *'cause I have to.*

There is an interesting paradox at work. The illusion girls are striving for is not simply one of beauty, but one of *natural* beauty -- however unnaturally it may be attained. Thus, the very idea of natural beauty is redefined cosmetically: even-toned beige skin, "earth color" lips and cheek color, brown-shadowed eyes.

Makeup is to be so artfully applied as to be virtually undetectable. Girls who do not adhere to the standards and techniques advocated by the magazines may be seen by boys as unattractively "made up," her "natural" beauty held in suspicion. Brownmiller (1984) noted that as levels of expertise needed to apply makeup "properly" increase, the "amateurs" will be exposed along class lines, with only the few who can afford it upholding increasingly professional conventions beauty. Is the *natural look* the simple result of girls' primary focus on makeup as a tool for concealing hormonally induced acne, or is it the dominant culture's redefinition of "natural" beauty as well-concealed contrivance?

Almost all of the girls with whom I spoke downplayed the importance of makeup in their self-presentation; the application of cosmetics was almost always explained as corrective rather than designed to improve one's attractiveness to others. They allowed, however, that *other* girls might be concerned about how their looks were received by boys. Magazine images clearly attempted to link male attention with the look makeup could give a girl, but the girls themselves generally denied this was an important reason for their use of cosmetic products.

Lana, however, reported that boys, in fact, have made it known to her that they prefer "natural" beauties to those who are more obvious in their attempts to appeal. It could be that adolescents of both sexes are simply expressing similar viewpoints -- that natural beauty is better than contrived beauty. **Girls, however, understand it behooves them to learn the ways in which *"natural" beauty can be contrived.***

The Fashion Imperative

In some aspects of their appearance, girls are unmoved by notions of femininity. The "in" styles are frequently antithetical to traditional presentations of feminine beauty, and **girls seemed unwilling to accept deviations from their standard, peer-sanctioned looks**, even when the fashions were heavily championed by the magazines. The styles girls claimed as their own were variations of "grunge" or "hippy" or "preppy," all of which incorporated some version of the jeans-and-t-shirt uniform and appeared to be essentially unisex. Girls often resented magazines' efforts to impose a certain fashion on them, or ignored style cues altogether:

Clothes were very important to these girls to the degree that the style conformed to their peer group's narrowly defined limits of acceptability. The brand of clothing was also important as a status signifier -- more popular girls wore more popular brands. In addition to friends, girls looked to trend-conscious stores like the GAP, and in-store personnel to provide them with fashion guidance. Teen magazines seemed to serve the purpose of providing girls with markers for fashion's outside boundaries. The girls generally affected an attitude of "just looking" when passing through the magazines' fashion ads and spreads, saying the clothes were just okay, not to their taste, outlandish or too expensive.

In influencing girls' tastes in makeup and hair, magazines were somewhat more influential. These are areas in which the girls are more prone to "tinker" with their look, but again, within inviolable limits. Girls mentioned trying new hairstyles and makeup colors, only to return to what they knew worked for them -- generally simpler styles which required less effort and made less of a "statement."

Summary

In the areas which I will call "style and artifice," concerning hair, makeup and fashion, magazine ads and text seemed to have only a marginal effect on girls. However, **girls seemed to have less success negotiating the standards of physical beauty inherent in the images directed to them.** Occasionally, girls made what seemed to be feminist-inspired arguments against content which they saw as trying to encourage an unwarranted focus on beauty:

> Cara: But, uhm, none of my friends really care about being a model...They'd rather go on to better things than to be a model. And all the guys think Kathy Ireland is just the best and we'll have these very big discussions how models are just people who just get paid to sit around in clothes and stuff like that.

However, the same girls were effectively being taught through magazine content to analyze their bodies for ways in which they deviate from the ideal (sometimes quite literally, as in the case of the beauty contest described earlier). Girls described with some consistency what constituted the ideal girl. Although the ideal was described as beautiful or "perfect," the image was also seen as very different from actual girls known to participants, even different from the most popular girls known to them. For some girls, models' beauty seemed to indicate a character flaw; females far more attractive than the norm were also seen as not as "nice" as the norm.

Girls seemed to be embarrassed to admit that images affected their assessment of self -- to do so seemed to imply a weakness girls could only attribute to others comfortably, or to themselves vaguely. Sharing lamentations over falling short of the ideal constituted a female bonding process. To friends fell the task of telling girls that they weren't really that fat, that plain, that broken out -- that they weren't that far off the mark set for them by the ever-present textual images of perfection. Being off the mark, however, was rationalized by girls who saw a closer approximation of the image in their future. The models, they said, are much older than they are. They've outgrown their acne. They're "loaded down" in makeup. They don't eat much and exercise all the time. They've had time to develop a bustline and get the braces removed. No one looks that good at age thirteen. Or do they?

At times, the girls came out strongly stating that the physical ideal they saw in magazines was an illusion. Then, as though to give the illusion credence, they faulted themselves for falling short of the ideal. After all, *some* girls must really look like that, they reasoned, or else they wouldn't be in the magazine. The physical images of femininity were problematic for the girls, who frequently acknowledged that the images they saw were not necessarily reflective of reality, then followed their critical observation with a statement of uncertainty:

> Rayna: (referring to a model in a Neutrogena ad) Yeah, I'm so sure her skin's that clear. If she took off all that makeup then...or maybe she could be. People are born like that, I mean. They don't always get pimples.

Discussion

The feminist authors whom I read prior to my interviews shared a concern that patriarchally prescribed images of female perfection, disseminated on a mass scale, might condition women and girls to be overly self-critical and self-conscious of their appearance. Feminists cited the media-induced correlation of (male-defined) good looks with female success as detrimental to true achievement by women. Psychologists such as Erikson (1959) and Brown and Gilligan (1990) located adolescence as a time of uncertainty and wavering confidence, when girls looked increasingly to the social environment for cues to support their vulnerable self-identities. These ideas led me to a working hypothesis that adolescent girls would work actively with magazine ads and texts, which function as beauty and fashion authorities, to create young visions of Bartky's "new femininity" which centers on the feminine physique and appearance.

The girls in this study were well aware that society had expectations of them: to be thin, to be attractive, to wear the right clothes, to get along with others. Teen magazines seemed to play a part in reinforcing these standards. However, girls were not as uniformly vulnerable to media messages concerning the feminine ideal as I, and McRobbie (1978), thought they might have been. Although girls were aware of the "beauty equals success" message inherent in the ads and articles, they don't seem to be interested in giving these influences carte blanche access to their/their peers' value systems. **They routinely ignore or reject magazine fashion formulations and advice on hair and makeup. However, girls seem ill-equipped to critically analyze magazines' physical images of femininity, even when they recognize they do not accurately reflect the real girls and women they see all around them.**

This study has not concluded, it has merely brought to the fore a number of new dimensions to be pursued. At the outset of this project, I suspected that my results might support the "codes" identified by McRobbie (1978). This was not the case, although as has been discussed, it may be that the defining characteristics of Western femininity have changed so dramatically that McRobbie's reading *might* have been corroborated by girls had they been interviewed in the mid-1970s. A course for future research would be to conduct a semiological investigation of the teen magazines girls read today to uncover how codes of femininity may have changed, and what those alterations might imply from the standpoint of critical theorists.

Because the participants in this study seem only to have just begun to "flex their wings" in the "flight to femininity," I would be interested in interviewing them again in two years to see how their interpretations change. When they are closer in age to the perceived ages of the magazine models, will they feel that the "ideal" the models represent is more or less realistic? What comments would participants make on their observations of two years earlier?

Tangential to this scenario of an ongoing study, I would like to interview first-generation, adolescent daughters of Third World immigrants for their reactions to American media images of females which seem to systematically exclude portrayals of girls from this country's minority populations. During my interview with Lana, whose parents were Korean, I got my first sense of how such exclusion might be addressed by the girl. In many of Lana's comments, for example, regarding ads for the colored contact lenses she wanted to make her eyes "lighter" and makeup tips she was interested in to make her eyes "wider," she seemed to express a desire to affect a more Western appearance. Do these girls use the instruction the magazines provide to "fit in" to another cultural standard of femininity, and does appearing differently than this culture's "ideal" make them more or less susceptible to its influence?

Lastly, because this study focuses on the ways in which girls understand femininity as conveyed to them through the magazines they read, it may be fruitful to explore how readings of female subscribers to the new, "non-gendered" magazines like *Mouth2Mouth* differ from those of girls who buy the four magazines discussed in this study. Do they perceive that "non-gendered" teen magazines portray females differently than the older magazines, and if so, how do they interpret that difference? How does the magazine editorially envision and textually define the "non-gendered" interests of its readers?

Bartky (1990) theorizes that until women resist imposing upon themselves unnatural, male-defined ideals of the feminine physique, they are destined to internalize an enduring sense of deficiency. These feminists identify the need to locate and frame ways in which society could come to revalue the "feminine" -- ways which acknowledge all women and empower both sexes. The problem is that by virtue of its very name, femininity is believed to be the sole domain of the female. As long as characteristics historically associated with femininity are socially organized under a name inextricably linked with patriarchally defined images of "woman," females can be constrained by them. As a solution, Bartky suggests that girls and women need to "re-vision" the feminine in order to combat the rampant "image-mongering" to which they are subject:

> As part of our practice, we must create a new witness, a collective significant Other...it will allow and even encourage fantasy and play in self-ornamentation. Our ideas of the beautiful will have to be expanded and so altered that we will perceive ourselves and one another very differently than we do now (p. 43).

This research highlights the place where the voices of that collective, feminist voice could fruitfully begin its work -- in the early adolescent girl. An important part of this research project was making participants aware of my results, and discussing with them the implications of these findings. The project of reworking the negative ways in which women and girls can interact with the gendered messages in texts is a considerable one, but one which must begin with awareness. Additional research should not only document the nature of girls' interaction with texts, but help to create an awareness in girls which will contribute to their more critical assessment of these texts.

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Survey Data Indicate Some Magazines Can Help Readers Improve Society, Government By Providing Benchmarks and Forums

by

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(A paper prepared for delivery to the Magazine Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication at its national Convention in Washington, D.C., August 9-12, 1995.

Survey Data Indicate Some Magazines Can Help Readers Improve Society, Government By Providing Benchmarks and Forums

Could an informed, involved fraction of American magazines help facilitate the revitalization of responsive, effective government in Washington and foster a new sense of community and citizenship throughout the country? Could they help their readers appreciate their government, their heritage, and their opportunities for sharing in the American dream? Could they help those willing to look for it find and implement the informed consensus that is required for effective operation of representative government? If such public service is possible, which magazines are best suited to provide it? How can it be provided? How many magazines are already making the effort?

Raising those questions may seem presumptuous in light of limited empirical evidence to document magazine behavior and influence. Scholars have yet even to develop systematic, empirically tested typologies based on clearly delineated dimensions. After extensive review of magazine research from 1977 through 1991, Marcia Prior-Miller concluded that existing typologies or methods of classifying magazines are confined largely to a "commonsense" approach. [1] David Abrahamson, editor of a 1994 book on magazine research perspectives and prospects, reminds us that most scholars have chosen "to study magazines as isolated journalistic artifacts rather than as interesting products and catalysts of social, cultural, and economic change." [2] Dorothy Schmidt, a cultural historian, reports that "scant attention has been given to the continuing role of magazines as reflectors and molders of public opinion and political and social attitudes." [3]

But the questions merit exploration in light of the public dissatisfaction with government that was demonstrated in the 1994 elections and the continuing failure of our political parties and those they represent to find a consensus on how best to resolve growing challenges related to health, welfare, crime, and other concerns. There is a need for more understanding and less rhetoric. There is a need for a new commitment on the part of those in government and those they represent. It appears that many magazines could foster this consensus and commitment and that some are seeking to do so.

The idea that magazines can have influence on society, including government, and contribute to the development of a better America is certainly not new. In his widely cited assessment of American magazine performance during the first half of the current century, Theodore Peterson asserted that American magazines were responsible in some measure for the social and political reforms achieved in the United States during the 20th century. He said they not only interpreted issues and events, but also placed them in a national perspective and helped foster a sense of national community. He said further that they had provided low-cost entertainment, inexpensive instruction in daily living, and education in our cultural heritage. [4] Peterson noted the difficulty of measuring media impact, and he identified magazine shortcomings, such as encouraging the status quo and helping to create an unreal picture of the world. But he noted, "despite their shortcomings, magazines as an editorial medium made many genuine contributions to American life and culture." [5]

It's true that Peterson was writing in an era when general interest magazines such as Life, Look, and the Saturday Evening Post seemingly dominated the industry and reached into the homes of millions of Americans. In the years since then television has usurped some of the roles and influence once common to magazines and the magazine industry itself has become much more specialized and segmented. But several categories of magazines, including general magazines, news magazines and political and social topics magazines, and women's magazines, still reach millions of readers, and in many instances reach the educated, informed persons who could most likely have an impact on government and society. They still have a potential for positive influence on government and society if they will take the initiative to do so and their readers will respond in kind. Even specialized magazines have potential to affect parts of society. Specialized publications in entertainment, sports, religion, and other areas can provide information, forums, and benchmarks for issues in those areas.

Magazines can serve as watchdogs of government, outlets for complaints, forums for the exchange of ideas, and advocates of change or continuance as appropriate. Through their articles, columns, and letters, magazines can provide understanding and create a forum for productive discussion of issues. Through their editorials and other commentary, they can provide benchmarks against which officials and other citizens can measure their own ideas. Studies indicate that just giving people more information will not necessarily enable them to reach sound judgments. They need specific proposals and conclusions against which they can measure or compare their own. Magazines can help identify the underlying causes of the issues that challenge, and at times divide, the nation. They can cut through party rhetoric and help the people understand their government and those seeking to run it. They can keep the people's needs before their representatives, and they can help those representatives explain themselves to their constituents.

Some magazines may also want to join newspapers in exploring the public journalism that has drawn attention in recent months. Public journalism has been described as an effort to bring journalists and communities together to confront common needs. It is an effort by journalists "to connect with their communities in a different way, often by encouraging civic participation or regrounding the coverage of politics in the imperatives of public discussion and debate." [6] This approach, which can involve working with governments, schools, foundations, civic groups, and local associations in improving public discourse and civic culture, seems especially suited to city magazines. But the national community that magazines helped create might benefit from such help also, and specialization has created many non-geographical communities that might be motivated and assisted by appropriate magazines.

Research Questions and Approach

A first step in examining magazines' potential and performance in the expanded form of public service envisioned is to explore their commitment to social responsibility and their perceptions of what they have achieved and can achieve in this area. Are they providing the information and commentary on issues required for effective public forums and benchmarks? How much editorial space are they devoting to this? Do they seek to exert influence through editorials, essays, columns and other traditional forms of commentary; through the selection and presentation of articles, or both? Do they believe they have influence, and, if so, in what ways do they believe they are exerting it? These are the types of questions that will be explored in this paper. The answers were obtained in a national survey conducted earlier this year

Since there are no commonly accepted magazine typologies, the author had to decide first which of the common sense categories designated in available listings such as Standard Rate and Data would be most appropriate to a study of magazine potential and practice in this area. For reasons that will be noted in conjunction with each one, four categories were chosen: news weekly magazines, political and social topics magazines, general editorial magazines, and women's magazines. Since the news weekly and political and social topics magazines categories are small and since they are in many ways similar, they were combined for purposes of comparison.

It was decided to start with the weekly news magazines, which report extensively on government and society, and political and social topics magazines, which provide information, analyses and commentary on government and related topics. The news magazine category in Standard Rate and Data includes traditional news magazines such as Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News & World Report, and more specialized news magazines such as Business Week, TV Guide, The Sporting News, Jet, and People Weekly.

A report in the middle 1980s based on letters the researcher received from editors said that most of these magazines provided information and commentary on issues of interest to their readers. It reported that about a third of the magazines had used editorials; more than half had used columns, essays, or reviews; most had provided a forum, through the use of letters; and most had at times indicated positions through their selection and presentation of articles and other materials. Business Week said its primary function was to "interpret, report and analyze on a weekly basis those events that happen in the world of business." The Sporting News said it took stands and invited readers to express their views because readers, sports executives and the athletes themselves expect it. "Our primary functions are to inform and entertain the sports fan who wants more than he can get in the daily papers." TV Guide reported that it had sought to exert influence through articles, columns, commentary, reviews, and, on occasion, in an editorial feature called "As We See It." Even People, noted for its personality journalism, has sought on occasion to influence public opinion. Its editor commented on efforts to help the boat people arriving as refugees from the Far East by stimulating the formation of state-level agencies to help them. [7]

The political and social topics category includes well-known names such as The Nation, The New Republic, and National Review, and others such as The American Spectator, Commonweal, and Human Events. While these magazines are different in their coverage and philosophies, most are similar in their concern for issues, albeit different issues at times. Their great potential for providing information, forums and benchmarks on issues is reiterated in the introduction to The New Republic Reader: Eighty Years of Opinion and Debate, published in 1994. Dorothy Wickenden, editor of the reader, suggests that the magazine was "conceived to perpetuate the free exchange of ideas in the hope of creating a more civil society." She said Herbert Croly, its founder, said his object "was less to inform or entertain its readers than to start little insurrections in the realm of their convictions." Many decades later in the 75th anniversary issue, the editors declared, "We still believe in the possibility of change, in the moral and historical grandeur of individual and social action -- and in the importance of ideas as the seeds of change and the springs of action." [8] Even a cursory look would confirm that magazines such as The New Republic remain active in such endeavors.

It is also clear that the combined circulations of news weekly and political and social topics magazines do not reach the huge audiences reached by general magazines in their heyday and do not reach the numbers that might be required for the public service impact envisioned by the author today. To increase the universe to a more meaningful size and reach the magazines most likely to deal with political and social issues, it was decided to add the general editorial magazines and women's magazines listed in Standard Rate & Data. Neither of these complete listings would meet all of criteria for typologies mentioned by Paul Davidson Reynolds and Edward Tiryakian. [9] Researchers seeking to provide detailed comparisons of "general" magazines or "women's" magazines through content analysis or some other methodology might wish to develop a more restrictive definition of categories and eliminate some of the magazines now included in the Standard Rate and Data listings. A few were eliminated from this study when it was determined that they were cross-listed in another category more appropriate to them. With these slight modifications, the Standard Rate and Data listings seem appropriate for the study's goals. The substantial response coupled with the common knowledge of the many prominent magazines which responded provide confidence in the results.

General editorial magazines have a tradition for presenting information and commentary on issues. Editorials were staples in some of the prominent general interest magazines of the pre-television era such as the Saturday Evening Post and Life. But their successors are more likely to rely on selection and presentation of articles to express opinions. George Horace

Loirimer instituted an editorial page at the Post before World War I. Editor Ben Hibbs instituted a "Letters to the Editor" department in 1947, and Edmund Duffy, who three times won Pulitzer Prizes for his cartoons, became editorial page cartoonist in 1949. The Post often addressed national concerns, as it did on May 3, 1952, when it encouraged the Republican party to nominate Dwight D. Eisenhower for president. The nostalgia Post, started in the summer of 1971 after the original died in January, 1969, eschewed the traditional forms but continued to express its ideas and ideals in articles and features. [10] In part as a response to the events leading up to World War II, the original Life magazine started carrying commentary in 1941 and began a regular editorial page in 1942. The new Life, started in 1978 six years after the original succumbed in 1972, has also eschewed the traditional editorial forms in its presentation of contemporary life. [11] The Reader's Digest has always eschewed traditional forms but has exerted much influence through the selection, presentation and timing of its articles. Its continued support of conservative causes prompted one writer in the 1980s to describe the magazine and President Ronald Reagan as "the nation's two dominating institutions of populist conservatism. Each delivers a Republican message heavily laced with humor, optimism and wealth-by-bootstrap advice." [12]

Despite the assertion by some that women's magazines are more likely to be market-conscious than socially responsible, their inclusion here seems appropriate. Not only do they still reach millions of readers, but they also discuss many issues such as health care, crime, and education that are important to the nation as a whole. Some also have been noted for their stands on issues. The Ladies' Home Journal was among the leaders in the fight for pure food and drug laws at the turn of the century, and it has become involved in various causes since, including the fight against drugs and the battle to get answers on the Missing in Action in the Vietnam War. [13] Glamour has taken strong, sometimes controversial stands, under the leadership of Ruth Whitney during the past 25 years. It has been a leader in the fight for human rights, including the rights of minorities and women, and it has used editorials as well as articles to present its positions on issues. Whitney asserts that magazines and other media do help shape opinion, and she says the risks involved in editorial decisions make the editor's job satisfying. In a talk at Drake University in 1993, she said, "I truly believe that if six months go by and you have offended neither your readers nor your advertisers, chances are you're not doing your job as editor." [14] Family Circle presented a special report on the dangers of handguns to children in 1994, and it has joined with Essence, an African-American magazine, this year in a study of race in America. [15]

City magazines comprise another category that can assist readers in becoming informed and taking action by presenting information and commentary, and some are doing that. Ernest C. Hynds reported at the 1993 AEJMC convention in Kansas City that most of these magazines provide information and commentary on issues and that most believe their efforts have had at least some influence. He reported that while most of these magazines emphasize information about lifestyles, food, travel, and entertainment, many point out community problems and needs and about half seek to provide an alternative viewpoint to that of the local newspaper. He said that most take stands through selection and presentation of articles and labeled commentary on local issues, and that most agree they should run more articles and editorials on issues because their readers can exert influence in the community. [16]

Method

Editors at magazines in the four categories selected for the survey were sent a cover letter, a four-page questionnaire composed mostly of multiple choice questions, and a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Several weeks after the first mailing a similar mailing was sent to those that had not responded, and several weeks after that the magazines that still had not responded were called by telephone. Because they have much in common and because there are so few of them in each category, news magazines and political and social topics magazines were grouped together for purposes of tabulation and discussion. Usable responses were received from 60% (N=52) of the general magazines, 61% (N=16) of the news and public affairs magazines, and 52% (N-27) of the women's magazines. All together, 58% (N=95) of those contacted responded.

To facilitate discussion, the results have been collected and will be presented under four headings: 1) Functions, 2) Overall Content, 3) Issues and Influence, and 4) Past and Current trends.

Results

Functions. Respondents in all three categories cited many of the same functions as important to their magazines, and many of these functions can contribute to providing forums and benchmarks. More than three-fourths said that reporting news of interest to readers is an important function, and more than two-thirds, including all the news and political and social topics magazines and 78% of the women's magazines, said interpreting and analyzing such news is important. Most of the magazines agreed that informing readers about issues such as health care and crime is important, but only 38% of the news and political and social topics magazines as compared with 62% of the general magazines and 96% of the women's magazines said providing service features on health, finances and other reader concerns is important. Most of the respondents agreed that providing a forum for discussion of issues important to their readers is an important function of their magazines. Almost half (48%) of the general magazines, 69% of the news and political and social topics magazines, and 56% of the women's magazines agreed that providing benchmarks through editorials and labeled commentary is important. Most of the magazines review books, movies and other forms of art, but only half or less said fiction or other forms of entertainment are important to their magazines. (See Table 1.)

Not surprisingly, the magazines were divided over which of these functions is most important to them. Half the news and political and social topics magazines said interpreting and analyzing news of interest to readers is most important; 19% listed reporting news of interest as most important, and 13% listed providing a forum for discussion of issues important to readers as most important. General and women's magazines ranked providing features on health, finances, and other matters of interest to readers as most important. Of the general magazines, 18% cited that, 13% cited reporting news, and 13% cited analyzing news as most important. Of the women's magazines, 33% cited offering services, 22% cited reporting news, and 4% cited interpreting and analyzing news as most important.

Overall Content. While the overall content of the magazines varies in many respects, there are some interesting similarities in the three categories. Moreover, many of the similarities are in areas that could support public forums and provide benchmarks for readers. More than three-fourths in each category use letters to the editor, more than two-thirds use essays and interpretive articles as well as narrative articles, and more than half use editor's columns, reviews, interviews, non-celebrity personality profiles, news stories, issue-oriented pictures, and feature pictures. Fewer than 40% use lists of activities, one of the staples of city magazines. The most striking differences are in areas such as celebrity profiles, how-to-do-it articles, opinion columns, and advice columns; 70% of women's magazines use celebrity profiles, as compared with 48% of general magazines and 44% of news and political and social topics affairs magazines. Only 6% of news and political and social topics magazines use how-to-do-it articles as compared with 48% of general magazines and 89% of women's magazines, and only 6% of news and political and social topics magazines use advice columns as compared with 31% of general magazines and 81% of women's magazines. In an area more productive of benchmarks and forums, 75% of news and political and social topics magazines use opinion columns as compared with 37% of general magazines and 56% of women's magazines. (See Table 2.)

As expected, the news and political and social topics magazines devote a much higher percentage of their editorial content to reporting and commenting on issues. More than a third (37%) said they devote between 91% and 100% to such matters, and more than three-fifths (62%) devote 61% or more. Only 20% of the general magazines and 4% of the women's magazines reported using 61% or more of their space in this way. In contrast most of the general (62%) and women's (63%) magazines use 30% or less of their space for reporting and commenting on issues. They do carry out these functions, however, and the fact that they devote less space to them may actually make the issues discussed stand out. (See Table 3.)

As for frequency of reporting and commentary, more than half of the magazines said they "often" provide information on social or political issues such as health care, crime, education, and the environment, and about three-fourths said they do so at least "occasionally." The women's magazines had the highest frequency of providing such information: 63% said they do so "often" and 30% said they do so occasionally. (See Table 4.)

Issues and Influence. Most of the magazines included in the study cover and comment on issues they believe important to their readers, and most of them believe their coverage and their commentary have influence. More than a third of the magazines in all categories said their coverage of issues had had "much" influence on readers, and more than two-thirds said it had had "much" or "considerable" influence. Much influence was claimed by 35% of the general magazines and 44% of both news and political and social topics and women's magazines. Considerable influence was claimed by 35% of the general magazines, 38% of the news and political and social topics magazines, and 33% of the women's magazines. Less than 10% of the magazines said they did not believe that they had achieved any influence. (See Table 5.)

Magazines in all three categories employ a variety of approaches in seeking to influence readers' thinking and actions regarding issues and events. The two most frequently employed are "selection of articles to be published," used by 81% of general magazines, 75% of news and political and social topics magazines, and 89% of women's magazines, and "presentation (content and writing) of articles," used by 75% of general magazines, 81% of news and political and social topics magazines, and 85% of women's magazines. Almost two-thirds (63%) of news and political and social topics magazines, 35% of general magazines, and 41% of women's magazines said they use editorials. Almost a third (31%) of news and political and social topics magazines, but only 12% of general magazines, and 11% of women's magazines use cartoons for this purpose. Varying percentages of the magazines also use essays, columns, and other labeled commentary to influence readers. (See Table 6.)

More than half of the magazines said they take stands on issues through editorials, essays, columns, or other labeled commentary at least "occasionally." A breakdown by categories shows general magazines, 35% "often" and 23% "occasionally"; news and political and social topics magazines, 50% and 19%; and women's magazines, 30% and 41%. Only 19% of general magazines and news and political and social topics magazines and only 4% of women's magazines said they never take stands.

Most of the editors said they believe their commentary does have influence. More than a third (44%) of news and political and social topics magazines, 23% of general magazines, and 33% of women's magazines said they have "much influence," and 25% of news and political and social topics magazines, 21% of general magazines, and 30% of women's magazines said they have "considerable" influence. Only 2% of general magazine editors and none in the other two categories said they did not believe they have any influence.

Editors reported a number of ways in which they believe they influence readers. Almost 90% in each category said they believe they "prompt readers to consider new ideas"; 62% of general magazines, 56% of news and political and social topics magazines, and 63% of women's magazines said they "reenforce existing beliefs"; 56% of general magazines, 69% of news and political and social topics magazines, and 37% of women's magazines said they "help build agendas for thought and action"; and 50% of general magazines, 63% of news and political and social topics magazines, and 44% of women's magazines said they "persuade readers to change their minds." Most said they exert influence by providing information that readers need and seek; most said they exert a long-range, cumulative influence, and smaller percentages said they influence the nation's literature and culture. (See Table 7.)

Most editors said they feel free to comment on issues. More than three-fourths of the general magazine editors said they feel "very free" (38%) or "free" (38%) to comment; more than two-thirds of the news and political and social topics magazine editors said they feel "very free" (50%) or "free (19%)," and more than half of the women's magazine editors said they feel "very free (30%)" or "free" (33%) to comment. Only 10% of general magazine editors, 12% of news and political and social topics editors, and 4% of women's editors said they feel "very hesitant" to comment. (See Table 8.)

Past and Current Trends. Most editors in all three categories agreed that magazines have been responsible in some measure for the social and political reforms made in the United States during the second half of the 20th century, that they have provided a national perspective on issues and helped to create a sense of national community, that they have provided low-cost entertainment and low-cost education for millions of Americans, and that they have contributed to Americans' understanding of their culture and heritage. (See Table 9.) Most also agreed that magazines must share with other mass media, especially television, blame for perpetuating stereotypes and creating an unreal picture of life in the United States and the world. (See Table 10.)

Most editors agreed that magazines can and should provide more information and commentary about social and political issues because their readers can exert influence on government and the private sector. More than four-fifths of news and political and social topics magazines said they "strongly agree" (25%) or "agree" (56%) with that statement. Three fourths of general magazines said they "strongly agree" (15%) or "agree" (60%), but less than half of the women's magazines "strongly agree" (22%) or "agree" (22%). (See Table 10.)

Editors were more divided over whether magazines should engage in "public journalism" -- that is seek to involve citizens in the operation of their government through forums, seminars, and other activities as well as through their publications. More than half of the general magazine editors "strongly agree" (19%) or "agree" (39%) with that statement; but less than half of the news and political and social topics magazine editors "strongly agree"

(19%) or "agree" 25%; and less than half of the women's editors "strongly agree" (11%) or "agree" (37%). (See Table 10.)

Editors were in broad agreement over trends in magazines today, including several that might reflect an increased interest in social responsibility. More than two-thirds cited "increasing reader involvement via letters, surveys, and online programs" as a trend; 71% of general magazine editors, 81% of news and political and social topics magazine editors, and 93% of women's magazine editors agreed on this. About a third identified "more in-depth coverage of issues" as a trend; 31% of general magazine editors, 38% of news and political and social topics magazine editors, and 37% of women's magazine editors agreed. Less than a fourth agreed that there is a greater use of editorials to address issues; 21% of general magazine editors, 13% of news and political and social topics magazine editors, and 11% of women's magazine editors agreed. In other areas, most agreed that specialization or segmentation; improved use of graphics, pictures and white space; extensive use of self-help information; and extensive use of free-lance articles are all trends. (See Table 11.)

Observations and Conclusions

1. Many magazines, including general and women's magazines as well as news and political and social topics magazines, are already reporting, interpreting and analyzing issues such as health care and crime that are important to their readers; almost two-thirds of those responding to the survey said that they are providing forums

for discussion of issues, and more than half said they are providing benchmarks through editorials and other labeled commentary.

2. Most editors of these magazines said that they feel free to comment on issues, that they are providing information and commentary on issues, and that they believe their efforts are influencing readers. More than five-sixths said they prompt readers to consider new ideas, more than half said they reenforce existing beliefs, and about half said they persuade readers to change their minds.

3. Most of these magazines present opinions on issues through selection and presentation of articles rather than through editorials, essays and other labeled commentary. But about half are using one or more of the traditional approaches.

4. Most editors conceded that magazines must share with other mass media, especially television, blame for perpetuating stereotypes and creating an unreal picture of life. But they agreed that magazines have been responsible for social and political reforms in recent decades, that magazines have provided a national perspective on issues and helped create a sense of national community, that they have provided low-cost education as well as low-cost entertainment, and that they have contributed to Americans' understanding of their culture and heritage.

5. Most editors agreed that their magazines should provide more information and commentary regarding social and political issues because their readers can exert influence, but only about

half agreed that magazines should get involved in the "public journalism" that has attracted the attention of newspapers in recent months.

6. Editors identified several trends that look encouraging, and one that may be a cause for concern. More than 70% cited increasing reader involvement via letters, surveys, and online programs as a trend, and more than 30% cited more in-depth coverage of issues as a trend. Of possible concern, about two-thirds cited increasing acquisition of magazines by large media groups as a trend. For some, this could mean greater resources to explore issues and serve readers. For others, it could mean a reduction in activity that could be controversial.

7. Women's magazines are much more involved in reporting and commenting on issues than might be expected from the apparent emphasis on celebrities, fashions, service features, and sex in many of them. Slightly higher percentages of them than the general magazines said they provide information and analysis on issues, a forum for discussion of issues, and benchmarks for making decisions through commentary. Their selection of issues may be more restrictive at times as they look to their readers' interests, but many issues once referred to as women's issues are now properly recognized as everybody's issues.

8. This study helps document the potential of magazines for providing information and commentary on issues, the desire of many editors to influence their readers on issues, and the perception of editors as to how successful they have been in achieving influence.

Future studies should explore what uses readers are making of the information and commentary provided and to what extent they are being influenced by it. Are magazines, for example, helping to set agendas for candidates and office-holders?

9. Researchers must continue in their research to use the sometimes unsatisfactory categories of magazines provided in sources such as Standard Rate and Data because the industry uses them for its purposes. At the same time, they should seek to develop typologies that would provide more precise definitions and facilitate comparisons.

10. In summary, the study indicates that a small fraction of American magazines could help facilitate the revitalization of responsive, effective government in Washington and foster a new sense of community and citizenship throughout the country if they and their readers commit to doing so.

News weeklies, political and social topics magazines, general magazines, and women's magazines comprise only a small percentage of the nation's more than 11,000 magazines, but they have millions of readers and great potential for providing the information, forums, and benchmarks their readers need to take informed action.

It appears that some of these magazines already are serving as watchdogs on government, outlets for complaints, forums for the exchange of ideas, and advocates for change or continuance of policies and programs as appropriate. Content analysis of the magazines and interviews with their readers could be used to document the extent of this involvement and influence.

Table 1

Percentage of Editors Who Rank Functions Listed As Important in Their Magazines

	General	News-PS	Women's
Report news of interest to readers.	83	75	81
Interpret, analyze news of interest to readers.	69	100	78
Offer service features on health, finances, other reader concerns.	62	38	96
Inform readers about issues such as health care, crime.	65	75	81
Provide forum for discussion of issues important to readers.	65	81	74
Provide benchmarks through editorials and labeled commentary.	48	69	56
Review books, movies, and other forms of art.	71	94	63
Provide fiction.	29	13	41
Provide other forms of entertainment.	50	31	41

Table 2

Percentage of Magazines That Use Editorial Materials Listed

	General	News-PS	Women's
Celebrity profiles	48	44	70
Other personality profiles	67	69	56
Interviews as such	56	88	63
How-to-do-it articles	48	06	89
Narrative articles	69	69	89
Interpretive articles	67	100	78
Surveys	48	56	78
Lists of activities	37	25	37
News stories	58	69	67
News pictures	44	63	52
Feature pictures	81	56	78
Issue-oriented pictures	54	63	59
Reviews	65	94	67
Essays	71	75	67
Editorials	52	63	52
Cartoons	38	75	41
Letters to the Editor	85	94	78
Editor's column	62	56	85
Opinion column(s)	37	75	56
Advice column(s)	31	06	81

Table 3

Percentage of Magazines That Devote the Percentage of Editorial Content Listed to Reporting and Commenting on Issues

	General	News-PS	Women's
Less Than 10 Percent	37	06	37
11 to 20 Percent	12	19	22
21 to 30 Percent	13	00	04
31 to 40 Percent	06	00	00
41 to 50 Percent	06	13	19
51 to 60 Percent	02	00	00
61 to 70 Percent	02	13	04
71 to 80 Percent	08	06	00
81 to 90 Percent	06	06	00
91 to 100 Percent	04	37	00
Did not answer	04	00	14

Table 4

Percentage of Magazines That Provide Information on Social or Political Issues Such as Health Care, Crime Education, and Environment at Frequencies Indicated

	General	News-PS	Women's
Often	50	68	63
Occasionally	32	06	30
Seldom	12	13	07
Never	06	13	00

Table 5

Percentage of Magazines That Say Their Coverage of Issues Has Had the Degree of Influence on Readers Indicated

	General	News-PS	Women's
Much influence	35	44	44
Considerable influence	35	38	33
Don't know	17	12	19
Limited influence	09	06	04
No influence	04	00	00

Table 6

Percentage of Magazines That Use Approaches Listed in Seeking To Influence Readers' Thinking or Actions Regarding Issues or Events

	General	News-PS	Women's
Selection of articles to be published.	81	75	89
Presentation (content and writing) of articles.	75	81	85
Editorials	35	63	41
Essays	50	50	41
Columns	48	69	70
Other labeled commentary	21	38	22
Cartoons	12	31	11

Table 7

Percentage of Editors Who Say They Believe Their Magazine Influences Readers in the Ways Indicated

	General	News-PS	Women's
Reenforces existing beliefs.	62	56	63
Prompts readers to consider new ideas.	87	88	89
Persuades readers to change minds.	50	63	44
Helps build agendas for thought, action.	56	69	37
Has long-range, cumulative influence on continuing readers.	69	75	56
Provides information readers need and seek.	90	88	85
Where it is primary information source.	63	63	67
Extent of influence is determined by how much magazine meets readers' needs.	56	56	59
Editorial content influences the nation's literature and culture.	35	38	07

Table 8

Percentage of Editors Who Say They Feel Free To Comment on Issues

	General	News-PS	Women's
Very free	38	50	30
Free	38	19	33
Some hesitance	10	19	30
Very hesitant	10	12	04
No answer	04	00	03

Table 9

Percentage of Agreement with the Statements Listed

Magazines have been responsible in some measure for the social and political reforms made in the United States during the second half of the 20th century.

	General	News-PS	Women's
Strongly agree	23	38	22
Agree	63	38	59
Don't know	06	18	11
Disagree	08	06	08

Magazines have provided a national perspective on issues and helped to create a sense of national community.

	General	News-PS	Women's
Strongly agree	31	31	33
Agree	53	57	67
Don't know	06	06	00
Disagree	08	06	00
Strongly disagree	02	00	00

Magazines have provided low-cost entertainment and low-cost education for millions of Americans.

	General	News-PS	Women's
Strongly agree	63	50	59
Agree	35	50	41
Don't know	02	00	00

Magazines have contributed to Americans' understanding of their culture and heritage.

	General	News-PS	Women's
Strongly Agree	48	44	33
Agree	44	44	67
Don't know	04	06	00
Disagree	04	06	00

Table 10

Percentage of Agreement with Statements Listed

Magazines must share with other mass media, especially television, blame for perpetuating stereotypes and creating an unreal picture of life in the United States and the world.

	General	News-PS	Women's
Strongly Agree	23	25	19
Agree	46	31	44
Don't know	06	00	15
Disagree	25	31	22
Strongly disagree	00	13	00

Magazines can and should provide more information and commentary about social and political issues because their readers can exert influence on government and the private sector.

	General	News-PS	Women's
Strongly agree	15	25	22
Agree	60	56	22
Don't know	08	00	15
Disagree	17	13	41
No Answer	00	06	00

Magazines should engage in "public journalism" -- that is -- they should seek to involve citizens in the operation of their government through forums, seminars, and other activities as well as through their publications.

	General	News-PS	Women's
Strongly agree	19	19	11
Agree	39	25	37
Don't know	13	13	22
Disagree	27	31	30
Strongly disagree	02	06	00
No Answer	00	06	00

Table 11

Percentage of Magazines Who Say They Believe Developments Listed Are Trends in Magazines Today

	General	News-PS	Women's
Specialization or segmentation.	87	88	81
Providing extensive self-help information.	77	56	81
Extensive use of free-lance articles.	67	50	59
More in-depth coverage of issues.	31	38	37
Greater use of editorials to address issues.	21	13	11
Increasing reader involvement via letters, surveys, online programs.	71	81	93
Acquisition of magazines by large media groups.	67	69	63
Improved use of graphics, pictures, and white space.	71	94	70

Notes

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3. Dorothy S. Schmidt, "Magazines," in M. Thomas Ingre, ed., *Handbook of American Popular Culture*, 2nd ed. (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), 648-649, cited in Abrahamson, The American Magazine, xviii.

4. Theodore Peterson, *Magazines in the Twentieth Century*, 2nd ed. (Urbana,Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1964), 448-451.

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MAGAZINE DIVISION

Sample Size in Content Analysis of Weekly News Magazines

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Sample Size in Content Analysis of Weekly News Magazines

All researchers using content analysis face the same question: How many content units are needed to reach valid conclusions? The answer, of course, depends on the purpose of the particular study. Because some research aims to make inference to a population of content from a sample, researchers must ask: What type of random sampling and what size of sample will allow valid inference to the population? Newspaper researchers have answers to this question in the form of methodological studies.[1] However, magazine researchers have no such studies to help them decide about sampling method and sample size.

The purpose of this study is to begin exploration into sampling methods for magazines. To achieve this purpose, this study examines the effectiveness of different samples of news magazines for drawing inferences to an entire year. Specifically, we compare random samples of six, eight, 10, 12, 14 and 16 issues, and samples of 12 issues stratified by month.

Background

Journalism Quarterly[2] contains more than 85 magazine content analyses; at least 25 focus on news magazines (*Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News & World Report*). At two recent AEJMC conventions, 21 magazine content analyses were presented, five on news magazines. The 1991, 1992 and 1993 *Journalism Abstracts* report 11, 12 and 15 news magazine content analyses.

This scholarly attention may reflect the assumed influence of news magazines among elites[3] or their large readership.[4] But there is surprisingly little attention given to magazine content analysis methodology, a neglect extending to sampling technique. On the other hand, Journalism Quarterly indices provide an indication of the variety of sampling techniques used.

Simple random sampling is rare. More common are studies using consecutive issues from a finite period (e.g., a political campaign),[5] or censuses that locate all instances of scarce content (e.g., articles on a specific subject).[6] Coders may physically check issues for pertinent content,[7] or trust an index or The Reader's Guide to have done the checking.[8]

Complex techniques are sometimes employed. Photos of blacks[9] were examined in all issues in every fifth year (e.g., 1937, 1942, 1947). A 1956-1976 study[10] of sports magazine coverage of women selected the first issue of each month in every fourth year. Examining science coverage, researchers[11] compared the first issues of each month in August 1964-January 1965 and August 1969-January 1970.

"Unusual" samples also appear. To analyze letters to the editor, Roberts et al.[12] selected one letter per topic heading in each 1966 letter section. Otto's[13] study of "sex and violence" collected all magazines "at a representative news stand in Salt Lake City, Utah" on April 17, 1961.

Of course, there are some random samples. Tankard and Peirce[14] randomly selected 12 weekly issues to compare with 12 consecutive monthly issues for a study of alcohol advertising.

Tsang[15] randomly sampled 10 issues from each of three non-consecutive years to study photos. Carter's[16] 1950-1966 study of ads used four randomly chosen issues per even-numbered year.

Why would one study use a random sample of 12, another 10, and still another four issues, to infer to a year's content? The answer might be that research purposes differ, available resources differ, and the frequency of target content varies. However, it might also reflect the absence of methodological studies to help guide magazine sampling.

Such research would help identify the optimal sample size for inferring to a year and whether systematic variation suggests a need for stratification. Newspaper sampling studies suggest daily variation of content affects representativeness of simple random samples (e.g., larger newsholes in ad-heavy Wednesday editions, or smaller Saturdays, can by chance be over-sampled). As an alternative, Stempel,[17] Jones and Carter,[18] and Riffe et al.[19] made sure all weekdays were represented with "constructed week" sampling: all the year's Mondays were identified and one randomly selected; all Tuesdays were identified and one randomly selected, etc.

Simple random sampling works because the Central Limits Theorem established that the distribution of randomly selected sample means would approximate the normal curve regardless of the population distribution. But simple random sampling "becomes comparatively inefficient when the population distribution is known and not normal," as with daily newsholes (emphasis added).

Then, "stratification based on that known and non-normal population distribution--as in the case of days of the week--yields better estimates with smaller samples."[20]

Two recent studies[21] have demonstrated stratification's benefit in sampling weekly newspapers and nightly newscasts. Randomly sampling 12 issues stratified by month was as efficient as a simple random sample of 14 for inferring to a year's content of weeklies. A stratified sample of two newscasts per month was more efficient than simple random samples and stratified samples of one constructed week per quarter.

Are there cycles in magazine publication schedules that affect sampling? Researchers seem to think so. Weaver and Wilhoit[22] looked at coverage of U.S. senators. Six constructed months per magazine (six first weeks, six second weeks, six third weeks and six fourth weeks) were drawn during the two-year period, yielding a total of 24 issues of each magazine.

To explore changes in business magazines, Mayo and Pasadeos[23] selected a constructed year for each five-year (1964-1968, 1974-1978 and 1984-1988) interval: i.e., 52 issues from 1964-1968, 52 from 1974-1978, etc.

In Patterson's[24] study of Vietnam coverage, issues were selected at random, provided 12 per year were included. Examining unnamed attribution, Wulfemeyer[25] selected one issue at random from each month. Stout *et al.*[26] stratified by quarter, randomly selecting three issues per quarter in a seven-year look at magazine "advertorials."

Chou et al.[27] randomly chose one issue per quarter per year (1970, 1975, 1985), and randomly selected seven comparative ads per issue. Lemert and Ashman[28] stratified news/opinion magazines by quarter and selected issues in each quarter to reach a quota of 50-70 items containing "mobilizing information."

These studies show a variety of stratification approaches used in magazine content analyses. However, there is apparently no empirical basis--in terms of direct comparisons--for concluding the superiority of stratified sampling over simple random.

This study's research objective was to provide such a basis, by comparing random and stratified samples in news magazine content analyses. Our specific research questions were:

1. What is the minimum number of randomly selected issues needed for accurate inference to a year's issues of a news magazine?
2. Is monthly stratified sampling more efficient than simple random sampling for accurately inferring to a year's issue of news magazines?

Method

Testing the efficiency of different sample techniques and sizes for inferring to a population of magazines required three steps: (1) calculating the population parameters for a year; (2) evaluating the effectiveness of various sizes of simple random samples; and (3) comparing the effective simple random sample sizes with monthly stratified samples. To create the population parameters, we analyzed the 1990 issues of Time (n=52).[29] This was the most recent year with all issues available in the library. Five variables were coded: number and total inches of stories, number and total inches of stories about the United States, and number of photos.

Five variables were selected in order to check how the variable used in a study might impact effectiveness of sample sizes. Not all types of content appear in news magazines with the same regularity. These counting and size variables are commonly used in magazine studies and in newspaper content methodological studies. A reliability check with 156 items from a 1993 issue of Newsweek yielded simple agreement percentages of 100% on story count, 97% on photos and 94% on identification of U.S. stories.

After the population parameters were calculated, the next step was to generate 50 simple random samples for a variety of sample sizes. Fifty such samples were selected for sample sizes of six, eight, 10, 12, 14 and 16 issues. The five variables were coded for each sample. To test the effectiveness of each sample size with a variable, we determined the percentage of the 50 samples whose mean fell within one and two standard errors of the population mean. This percentage was then compared to the expected percentage as determined by the Central Limits Theorem. Using the normal curve, the Central Limits Theorem predicts that 95% of random sample means will be within plus or minus two standard errors of the population mean, and that 68% would be within plus or minus one standard error of the population mean.

Whether a sample size was effective was based on the following decision rule: a sample size was effective if both its percentages equalled or exceeded the expected percentages, provided the next larger sample size did not drop below either of the expected percentages. For example, if 95% of sample means from 50 samples with six issues were within plus or minus two standard errors of the population mean, the size was considered effective unless the percentage dropped under 95% for the 50 samples with eight issues. Under this condition, the effectiveness of the six-issue samples was considered an anomaly, and the acceptable level became the next sample size (perhaps 10) that met the criteria.

The third step involved comparing the results of the smallest effective simple random samples with monthly stratified sampling. Monthly stratified sampling creates a "constructed year" by randomly selecting one issue from each month. This method of sampling was evaluated for effectiveness using the same rule applied to simple random samples. The most efficient method was selected based on which method exceeded or equalled the expected results for all five variables and both conditions (one and two standard errors).

Findings and Discussion

Table 1 reveals population (annual) means, standard deviations and coefficients of variation (CV) on the five variables. The CV is the standard deviation divided by the mean, and indexes category variability. These five values are about the same level found for weekly newspaper variables.[30] By contrast, a value exceeding 1.0 indicates the standard deviation is larger than the mean, indexing considerable variability.[31]

The first step in accomplishing the research objective was to generate the 50 samples for simple random samples of size six, eight, 10, 12, 14 and 16 issues, and 12 issues stratified by month, for a total of 350 samples (50 by seven sizes/types).

To address the first research question (What is the minimum number of randomly selected issues needed for accurate inference to a year's issues?), we compared the percentage of means in each set of 50 simple random samples that were within plus or minus one or two standard errors of the population mean (see Table 2).

The total photographs variable is illustrative of our decision rule. Note that for a sample size of six, 74% of the 50 samples were within plus or minus one standard error of the population mean (thus exceeding the 68% prediction of the Central Limits Theorem), but only 88% were within plus or minus two standard errors (less than the 95% predicted by the theorem). It was not until 50 simple random samples of 10 issues were used that both predictions were exceeded. But, with 50 samples of 12, only 62% fell within one standard error. Thus, the "success" with samples of 10 was an anomaly, and we chose the next larger sample size; a random sample of 14 issues of Time was the minimum effective and reliable sample size for total photographs.

For total stories, however, samples of size 12 satisfied both standard error predictions. With total inches of stories, the anomaly recurred: samples of 10 seemed effective, but samples of 12 dropped below the two-standard-error prediction. Again, a random sample of 14 was the minimum effective sample size.

By our decision rule, a sample size of 16 issues was the smallest (though 16 of 52 issues is a 31% sample!) effective sample size for total U.S. stories (because of the anomaly with samples of 14), while samples of 14 sufficed for inches of U.S. news.

But, as noted above, newspaper and broadcast news sampling studies have demonstrated the impact on efficiency of stratification. Our second research question was: "Is monthly stratified sampling more efficient than simple random sampling for accurately inferring to a year's issues of news magazines?"

Table 3 compares the results of our effective random samples of sizes 12 and 14 issues with a stratified (by month) sample of 12 issues to see which one is more efficient. As noted above, one issue was randomly selected from the January issues, one from the February issues, etc., for each of the 50 samples drawn.

Generally speaking, the monthly stratified sample of 12 issues was more efficient than a simple random sample of 12 issues. Only on total U.S. stories did the stratified sample fail to exceed one prediction of the Central Limits Theorem.

However, this outcome was so inconsistent with the other patterns that we "deconstructed" the samples, examining the individual issues chosen in the four (of 50) samples that "missed" the predictions. In two of them, we discovered, a December "year-in-review" issue was randomly selected. Just as large-newshole Sunday newspapers are atypical of the rest of the week's papers, that end-of-year issue--with more photos and less domestic news than usual--was atypical, and affected the outcome.[32]

Comparing the stratified sample to simple random samples of 14 is also illustrative. On all variables except total U.S. stories, the stratified sample was as efficient as the larger sample. For that domestic stories variable, the stratified sample "hit" only on the single-standard-error prediction: the sample of 14 hit on neither prediction.

Conclusions

The most efficient sampling method for making inference to a year's issues of a news magazine is a monthly stratified sample of 12 issues. This "constructed year" method worked for nine of the ten tests (five variables by two standard error comparisons). The one failure resulted from inclusion in two samples of a review issue that was an outlier, more than three standard deviations from the population mean. The next most efficient method was simple random sampling of 14 issues. It exceeded expectations on eight of 10 tests.

These results are consistent with research about sampling weekly newspapers, where stratifying by month was also the most efficient sampling method. This consistency probably represents similar monthly variations in content and the impact of selecting a relatively high proportion (23%) of the population in the sample.

However, news magazines have a problem weekly newspapers do not. News magazines have review issues that appear as a regular issue at the end of the year. These issues typically have longer and fewer stories and more photographs. Researchers must decide if their sample should include these issues and what impact they might have on the research conclusions.

As with all research, this study has limitations. It concerns only studies that want to infer to a year's issues. As mentioned earlier, some studies involve looking for particular types of stories for content analysis. Other sampling approaches, including purposeful sampling, will work better for these studies. Consecutive-issue samples, sometimes within a finite time frame (like an election campaign), and censuses (perhaps relying on an index of relevant content as a sampling universe) may be necessary.

In addition, this study addressed only five variables measuring frequency and length of items. These variables are typical of content measures used in content analyses, but are essentially of the same type: "counting" variables. Research examining sampling for content analysis of meaning (i.e., positive and negative statements) would be a useful addition to the literature on content analysis sampling.

The five variables used here showed small amounts of variation. This may not be the case with other types of variables. Researchers would be well advised to check the coefficient of variation for a sample of their content, and if it exceeds .5, consider randomly selecting more issues to use with the constructed year.[33]

Despite its limitations, this study's objective was modest: to provide an initial test of the different sampling techniques content analysts use. Those researchers often choose from among different techniques, despite the absence of an empirical basis for choosing one over the other.

The difference between sampling one issue per month (for a total of 12) or sampling 14 issues may seem a minor difference. However, depending on the target variables, resources available, and period under study (including, perhaps, longitudinal or multi-year designs), that two-issue gain in efficiency may be important.

Notes

1. Guido H. Stempel III, "Sample Size for Classifying Subject Matter in Dailies," Journalism Quarterly 29 (1952):333-334; Robert L. Jones and Roy E. Carter Jr., "Some Procedures for Estimating 'News Hole' in Content Analysis," Public Opinion Quarterly 23 (Fall 1959):399-403; and Daniel Riffe, Charles F. Aust and Stephen R. Lacy, "The Effectiveness of Random, Consecutive Day and Constructed Week Sampling in Newspaper Content Analysis," Journalism Quarterly 70 (1993):133-139.

2. We examined each study identified as magazine content analysis in all Journalism Quarterly indices through Autumn 1994 (Vol. 71 no. 3). The accuracy of the indexing process was not assessed.

3. Carol H. Weiss, "What America's Leaders Read," Public Opinion Quarterly 38 (1974):1-22. On the other hand, a number of studies have centered on the alleged partisanship associated with each news magazine. Melvin L. DeFleur and Everette Dennis describe Time as quite Republican originally, but now more moderate; Newsweek as liberal; and U.S. News & World Report as having a "strong business orientation," in their Understanding Mass Communication 5th ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994), p. 136.

However, Evarts and Stempel found that the assumed continuum (Newsweek liberal, U.S. News conservative, and Time "between") was not related to content in their study of 1972 campaign coverage. See Dru R. Evarts and Guido H. Stempel III, "Coverage of the 1972 Campaign by TV, News Magazines and Major Newspapers," Journalism Quarterly 53 (1974):645-648, 676.

4. DeFleur and Dennis (Understanding Mass Communication, p. 131), while noting the "national newspaper" role news magazines have long served, point out that their increase in circulation--18% during the last 20 years--has not kept pace with the growth of their target demographic category.

5. Consecutive issue samples were used to explore accuracy of news magazines' gossipy predictions, presidential coverage, campaign coverage and Supreme Courts. See: Michael W. Singletary, Raymond Boland, William Izzard and Terry Rosser, "How Accurate are News Magazines' Forecasts?" Journalism Quarterly 60 (1983):342-344; John C. Merrill, "How Time Stereotyped Three U.S. Presidents," Journalism Quarterly 42 (1965):563-570; Evarts and Stempel op. cit.; Robert T. Buckman, "How Eight Weekly Newsmagazines Covered Elections in Six Countries," Journalism Quarterly 70 (1993):780-92; and E.F. Einseidel and M. Jane Bibbee, "The News Magazines and Minority Candidates," Journalism Quarterly 56 (1979):102-105; Michael E. Solimine, "Newsmagazine Coverage of the Supreme Court," Journalism Quarterly 57 (1980):661-663; and J. Douglas Tarpley, "American Newsmagazine

Coverage of the Supreme Court," Journalism Quarterly 61 (1984):801-804.

6. Examples include studies of ad portrayal of the elderly and blacks, and AIDS coverage. Brian Kvasnicka, Barbara Beymer and Richard M. Perloff, "The Portrayal of the Elderly in Magazine Advertisements," Journalism Quarterly 59 (1982):656-58; George M. Zinkhan, Keith K. Cox and Jae W. Hong, "Changes in Stereotypes: Blacks and Whites in Magazine Advertisements," Journalism Quarterly 63 (1986):568-72. Anette Grube and Karin Boehme-Duerr, "AIDS in International News Magazines," Journalism Quarterly 65 (1988):686-89.

7. Rich scanned three years of issues for "all articles relating to science and medicine." Perry looked at all 1966-73 business sections in news magazines for "foreign industrial disputes." Fedler looked at every relevant article in all issues to find coverage of the campaigns of John, Robert and Edward Kennedy. Moriarty and Popovich located all photos in a campaign. Mujahid's coders "physically checked" all 1962-65 issues for articles on Pakistan. Oates looked at all issues following the first human heart transplant for any social or ethical content in science coverage. See: Jonathon T. Rich, "A Measure of Comprehensiveness in Newsmagazine Science Coverage," Journalism Quarterly 58 (1981):248-253; David K. Perry, "Foreign Industrial Disputes in Time and Newsweek, 1966-1973," Journalism Quarterly 58 (1981):439-443; Fred Fedler, Ron Smith and Mike Meeske, "Time and Newsweek Favor John F. Kennedy, Criticize Robert and Edward Kennedy," Journalism Quarterly 60 (1983):489-496; Sandra E. Moriarty and Mark N. Popovich, "Newsmagazine Visuals and the 1988 Presidential Election," Journalism Quarterly 68 (1991):371-380; Sharif al Mujahid, "Coverage of Pakistan in Three U.S. Newsmagazines," Journalism Quarterly 47 (1970):126-130, 165; and William R. Oates, "Social and Ethical Content in Science Coverage by Newsmagazines," Journalism Quarterly 50 (1973):680-684.

8. To look at 1980-1988 news magazine coverage of terrorism, Simmons and Lowry drew a systematic random sample from pertinent articles in the Guide. Rosi's study of 1954-1958 nuclear test ban coverage sampled every third article in the Guide. Showalter looked at all articles on conscientious objectors in the Guide, an approach used by Yu and Riffe to study coverage of Chinese leaders, and by Moore et al. to study coverage of insects. See: Brian K. Simmons and David N. Lowry, "Terrorists in the News, as Reflected in Three News Magazines, 1980-88," Journalism Quarterly 67 (1990):692-696; Eugene J. Rosi, "How 50 Periodicals and the Times Interpreted the Test Ban Controversy," Journalism Quarterly 41 (1964):545-554; Stuart W. Showalter, "American Magazine Coverage of Objectors to the Vietnam War," Journalism Quarterly 53 (1976):648-652, 688; Yang-Chou Yu and Daniel Riffe, "Chiang and Mao in U.S. Newsmagazines," Journalism Quarterly 66 (1989):913-919; and Wayne S. Moore, David R. Bowers and Theodore

A. Granovsky, "What are Magazines Telling Us About Insects," Journalism Quarterly 59 (1982):464-467.

9. Paul Lester and Ron Smith, "African-American Photo Coverage in Life, Newsweek and Time, 1937-1988," Journalism Quarterly 67 (1990):128-136.

10. Leonard N. Reid and Lawrence C. Soley, "Sports Illustrated's Coverage of Women in Sports," Journalism Quarterly 56 (1979):861-863.

11. J.S. Sorenson and D.D. Sorenson, "A Comparison of Science Content in Magazines in 1964-65 and 1969-70," Journalism Quarterly 50 (1973):97-101.

12. Donald F. Roberts, Linda A. Sikorski and William J. Paisley, "Letters in Mass Magazines as 'Outcroppings' of Public Concern," Journalism Quarterly 46 (1969):743-752.

13. Herbert Otto, "Sex and Violence on the American Newsstand," Journalism Quarterly 40 (1963):19-26.

14. James W. Tankard and Kate Peirce, "Alcohol Advertising and Magazine Editorial Content," Journalism Quarterly 59 (1982):302-305.

15. Kuo-jen Tsang, "News Photos in Time and Newsweek," Journalism Quarterly 61 (1984):578-584, 723.

16. David E. Carter, "The Changing Face of Life's Advertisements," Journalism Quarterly 46 (1969):87-93.

17. Stempel, "Sample Size for Classifying Subject Matter in Dailies."

18. Jones and Carter, "Some Procedures for Estimating 'News Hole' in Content Analysis."

19. Riffe, Aust and Lacy, "The Effectiveness of Random, Consecutive Day and Constructed Week Sampling in Newspaper Content Analysis."

20. Ibid., p. 139.

21. Stephen Lacy, Kay Robinson and Daniel Riffe, "Sample Size in Content Analysis of Weekly Newspapers," Journalism Quarterly 72 (1995, in press); and Daniel Riffe, Jason Nagovan, Stephen Lacy and Larry Burkum, "The Effectiveness of Simple and Stratified Random Sampling in Broadcast News Content Analysis," paper presented to the annual convention, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Atlanta, 1994.

22. David H. Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, "News Magazine Visibility of Senators," *Journalism Quarterly* 51 (1974):67-72.

23. Charles Mayo and Yorgo Pasadeos, "Changes in the International Focus of U.S. Business Magazines, 1964-1988," *Journalism Quarterly* 68 (1991):509-514.

24. Oscar Patterson III, "Television's Living Room War in Print: Vietnam in the News Magazines," *Journalism Quarterly* 61 (1984):35-39, 136.

25. K. Tim Wulfemeyer, "How and Why Anonymous Attribution is Used by Time and *Newsweek*," *Journalism Quarterly* 62 (1985):81-86, 126.

26. Patricia A. Stout, Gary B. Wilcox and Lorrie S. Greer, "Trends in Magazine Advertorial Use," *Journalism Quarterly* 66 (1989):960-964.

27. Linly Chou, George R. Franke and Gary B. Wilcox, "The Information Content of Comparative Magazine Ads: A Longitudinal Analysis," *Journalism Quarterly* 64 (1987):119-124, 250.

28. James B. Lemert and Marguerite Gemson Ashman, "Extent of Mobilizing Information in Opinion and News Magazines," *Journalism Quarterly* 60 (1983):657-662.

29. 1990 was a leap year, and there were actually 53 issues published. The first issue, however, was a "year-in-review" special on 1989. Its exclusion permitted us to stay with the 52-issues-per-year concept, and to eliminate the effect of an atypical outlier issue. However, as discussed in the text and in note 32, 1990's own year-in-review issue exerted a major impact on the results of our sampling.

30. Lacy, Robinson and Riffe, "Sample Size in Content Analysis of Weekly Newspapers."

31. We use the CV to standardize the amount of dispersion in the five variables, making comparisons among the variables possible. But according to Blalock, CV is most often associated with between-*group* comparisons that center on how homogeneous the groups are, and not on the different group means. "It therefore might be somewhat misleading to compare the absolute magnitudes of the standard deviations." Instead, one should focus on "the size of the standard deviation *relative to that of the mean*" (emphasis in original). Hubert M. Blalock Jr., *Social Statistics*, rev. 2nd edition (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), p. 84.

What constitutes a "high" CV is a question Blalock leaves unanswered. However, in their study of television news sampling, Riffe *et al.* pointed out that their otherwise optimal, efficient stratified sampling technique failed (in terms of Central Limits predictions) when variables with CV's of .843 and 1.18 were used. Based on that outcome, and multiple analyses conducted for this and other sampling studies, we offer the caveat that whenever CV's exceed .5, researchers might begin to look carefully at their results. See Riffe, Nagovan, Lacy and Burkum, "The Effectiveness of Simple and Stratified Random Sampling in Broadcast News Content Analysis."

32. Consider that the population parameter for photos was approximately 93 photos, with monthly means between January and November ranging from 77 to 104. The monthly mean for December was 109. By contrast, the January-November monthly means ranged from 48 to 60 on total stories and the annual parameter was 51.5. The December monthly mean was only 45.

33. See note 31, supra.

TABLE 2

Percentage of Random Sample Means in Sets of 50 Samples Falling Within One and Two Standard Errors of Population Mean for *Time*

Days in Sample	6	8	10	12	14	16
Total Photographs						
One S.E.	74.0%	68.0%	74.0%	62.0%	74.0%	74.0%
Two S.E.	88.0%	94.0%	100.0%	98.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total Stories						
One S.E.	66.0%	62.0%	70.0%	72.0%	70.0%	76.0%
Two S.E.	94.0%	92.0%	94.0%	98.0%	98.0%	100.0%
Total Inches of News						
One S.E.	66.0%	64.0%	84.0%	70.0%	76.0%	78.0%
Two S.E.	96.0%	94.0%	96.0%	92.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total U.S. Stories						
One S.E.	80.0%	66.0%	74.0%	80.0%	66.0%	78.0%
Two S.E.	94.0%	94.0%	86.0%	96.0%	94.0%	100.0%
Inches of U.S. News						
One S.E.	56.0%	68.0%	60.0%	76.0%	76.0%	90.0%
Two S.E.	92.0%	96.0%	90.0%	94.0%	96.0%	96.0%

Note: The underline means the sampling exceeded chance.

TABLE 3

Percentage of Random Sample and Monthly Stratified Means in Sets of 50 Samples Falling Within One and Two Standard Errors of Population Mean

	Random Sample 12 Issues	Monthly Stratified 12 Issues	Random Sample 14 Issues
Total Photographs			
One S.E.	62.0%	72.0%	74.0%
Two S.E.	98.0%	96.0%	100.0%
Total Stories			
One S.E.	72.0%	78.0%	70.0%
Two S.E.	98.0%	96.0%	98.0%
Total Inches of News			
One S.E.	70.0%	90.0%	76.0%
Two S.E.	92.0%	98.0%	100.0%
Total U.S. Stories			
One S.E.	80.0%	74.0%	66.0%
Two S.E.	96.0%	92.0%	94.0%
Inches of U.S. News			
One S.E.	76.0%	76.0%	90.0%
Two S.E.	94.0%	96.0%	96.0%

Note: The underline means the sampling exceeded chance.

TV Guide: A Television Gatekeeper

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Introduction

For more than a quarter of a century, *TV Guide* has been one of the top selling magazines in America (Whetmore 1979, 75; Folio:500 1994). Unlike most other large-circulation magazines, *TV Guide* is linked to another medium with an even larger following. While television has worked its way into 98% of homes in America, *TV Guide*, as the "bible" of this "national religion," has managed to top the magazine market decade after decade (Seelye 1989, 41).

This magazine, which started as a local program listing sheet in Philadelphia, quickly became one of the nation's favorite magazines under the ownership and guidance of Walter Annenberg. According to *Folio:500 1994*, *TV Guide* generates the highest revenue of any magazine in the world. Yet this popular magazine has attracted little attention from researchers, although few magazines reach a wider or more diverse audience than *TV Guide*.

Each year, *TV Guide* produces a special Fall Preview Issue, in which it introduces new programs for the upcoming season and offers a short review of any pilot or early episodes viewed by the magazine's writers. These special issues have regularly caused an increase in circulation, generally by about one million copies. In 1976, *Business Week* reported that twenty-four million women and twenty million men used this issue to help chose what new programs they would watch (Altschuler and Grossvogel 1992, 64). Standard circulation figures jump by about one million for the Fall Preview Issue (Brocco 1995). With all these people looking to *TV Guide* for guidance in their viewing choices, the magazine has the potential to affect the winners and losers of each new season, and possibly, the types of shows the networks decide to run.

This study analyzed *TV Guide*'s ability to predict series longevity and *TV Guide*'s preference patterns based on genre of shows, demography of cast, or network on which the program originally appeared, and this information was used to explore *TV Guide*'s role in the "mainstreaming" and as a television gatekeeper.

Literature Review and Research Questions

TV Guide Research

Very few scholars have studied *TV Guide*'s editorial content. In 1993, Greenberg and Collette used the magazine's Fall Preview Issue to look at the demography of new television characters from 1966 to 1993. More significant was their effort to ascertain the viability of *TV Guide* as a research tool. They found *TV Guide* a useful research tool and a detailed record of television programming.

Greenberg and Collette are not the first researchers to use *TV Guide* as a tool for television analysis. In 1987, Skill, Robinson, and Wallace used Fall Preview Issues to select programs that used family as a primary vehicle; they then used this information to examine how television programs view the family unit. The results indicated that from 1978 to 1985, prime-time series portrayed conventional family models nearly three times more often than their non-traditional counterparts.

Jean Dye and Mark Harmon (1987), in a study specifically dealing with editorial content of *TV Guide*, analyzed the covers of the magazine, looking for patterns in the types of programming featured. They found that a disproportionate share of the covers depicted characters from regular network programming, while cable and public television were under-represented.[1]

TV Guide has been the subject of several advertising studies. In a 1989 study, Gilbert Williams looked at how program advertisements depicting sex and violence affect ratings. The data suggested that sex and violence in printed promotions did have a positive influence on ratings, although the findings were not overwhelmingly significant.

In another study, *TV Guide* was one of eight magazines (four national and four targeted to the elderly population) content analyzed for the portrayal of the elderly in advertisements (Kvasnicka, Beymer, and Perloff 1982). Unfortunately, no information was presented on the findings for individual magazines. The authors found that the elderly received limited coverage in national magazine advertising and that specialized magazine advertisements depicted seniors more often and in a more positive light than did general interest magazine advertisements.

Although several books have been written about *TV Guide*, few are as valuable as *Changing Channels: America in TV Guide*, which offers a comprehensive view of the magazine from 1953 to 1991 (Altschuler and Grossvogel 1992). This historical analysis stands alone as an unbiased record of the magazine. The authors placed particular emphasis on *TV Guide*'s representation of women and blacks, and on the magazine's coverage of news. They examined both the structure and content of the magazine over time, including sample articles and op-ed pieces.

Altschuler and Grossvogel drew a clear picture of the path they believed *TV Guide* has followed since its creation as a national magazine in 1954. The early profiles were little more than fluff pieces taken from the information sent out by network public relations. Although the magazine crusaded against violence, it was willing to make exceptions for certain shows the editors considered to be wholesome, despite their gunplay. During the 1950s, *TV Guide* considered itself "discreet, balanced, wholesome, and calm," and thought that was how it should be (Althschuler and Grossvogel 1992, 30).

During the 1960s, *TV Guide* became more critical of stars and behind-the-scenes action. A variety of writers were hired to produce more probing pieces about the dark side of Hollywood. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, the magazine began to take stands on public issues by using interviewees as its mouthpiece (Althschuler and Grossvogel 1992, 46).

The advent of more sedate medical and courtroom dramas led *TV Guide* to declare a sort of moral victory in the early 1970s, although the glory was short lived, according to Altschuler and Grossvogel, in light of the dull scripts that abounded. During this period, a disenchanted *TV Guide* gave up its dream of leading television viewers to programming enlightenment and began to accept television for what it was.

In 1976, a *TV Guide* outsider was hired as managing editor. This led to even more probing stories, along with the addition of the gossip that had formerly been excluded from *TV Guide* in an effort to avoid the fan magazine mentality. In the early 1980s, the magazine added the "Insider" section to liven-up the national wrap-around edition. This new gossipy format included bits of information about series and stars, and included special sections for soap operas and sports.

Altschuler and Grossvogel's depiction of the magazine indicates a definite pattern of accepting television as it was, while delving into the story behind the story.

A biography of the Annenberg family provided additional information about *TV Guide* (Cooney 1982). Walter Annenberg was the original owner of the national version of the magazine, and *The Annenbergs* includes some details surrounding the creation of the magazine and its operations through the years.

Other magazines have given little attention to *TV Guide*. Very few analyses of the magazine appeared before it was sold by Annenberg in 1988. One exception was an article that appeared in *The Humanist* in 1974 (Crowther); it looked at *TV Guide*'s coverage of politics and the Watergate scandal. In the late 1980s, two magazines offered strong analyses of the turmoil following Rupert Murdoch's purchase of *TV Guide* (Brady 1993; Seelye 1989). Despite promises to the contrary, Murdoch restructured *TV Guide* and made it more of a fan magazine than it had been in previous years.

Television Effects Research

By contrast, the medium covered in *TV Guide* has been studied by countless authors. The topics covered are varied and attest to the importance of television in the lives of many Americans. This importance carries over to *TV Guide*, which may play a role in many of the research topics traditionally limited to television itself. *TV Guide* in its coverage of television has promoted certain types of programming, which may be important in the viewers' selection of what they watch; television may not be the only medium to consider in many studies.

George Gerbner has spent his career studying the effects of television. One of his more interesting and controversial theories (Ogles 1987) concerns the cultivation of general concepts of social reality or "mainstreaming." Gerbner and his research partners

(1980, 1982) found, through their study of the effects of television, evidence supporting their belief that people conceptualize reality based on what they see on television. They further theorized that the more time a person spends watching television, the more distorted his or her view of the world will be; their views of the world will be more in line with other heavy viewers than with people of their own cultural background who watch less TV. This "mainstreaming" effect caused formerly heterogeneous groups to converge based on amount of television viewed. This theory has been criticized repeatedly by other researchers for not considering details such as content of programming viewed and types of messages that were "mainstreamed." This controversial theory has, however, been intensely studied and supporting evidence is available in a variety of studies. *TV Guide*'s possible role in "mainstreaming" has never been considered, however.

In a 1982 study, Slater and Elliot looked at the cultivation of social reality and found an important factor in the development of social realities. The authors studied a group of high school students from California and Oregon, and found that perceived program realism seemed to be the most important variable in the cultivation of social reality through television, adding more fuel to the "mainstreaming" fire.

Nancy Signorielli (1986) asserted that prime-time television presents a remarkably consistent portrayal of the world across program genres and that it offers few scheduling alternatives to avoiding violence-laden adventure programs. Signorielli further asserted that viewers have little opportunity to exercise any kind of choice in viewing, which supports Gerbner's socialization theory.

David Perry, on the other hand, disagreed with Gerbner's "mainstreaming" theory (1987). In a paper that combats the theory that television is eliminating diversity, he claimed that if the theory of "resonance" is correct, television cultivates and amplifies cultural differences.

Television Content Research

There have been a variety of other television studies concerning content and the messages sent to audiences. Estep and Macdonald (1983) conducted a study of prime-time crime programs to see how well the characters depicting acts of crime reflected reality and which crimes were being committed most often. They found an exaggerated focus on murder, robbery, and assault, and that the middle-class, white population was consistently over-represented.

Bradley Greenberg produced a book of television content analyses in 1980. This book included a series of content analyses that looked at various aspects of television programming, including racial representation, age representation, gender representation, and the role of the family on television. In his race and age studies, he found that both minorities and the elderly are under-represented on television. He also completed a series of studies concerning the portrayal of gender roles on television. In these studies, he found definite patterns in the types of roles men and women portray; men are more likely to give orders and be obeyed, while women are more feeling and more likely to understand. His family-interaction studies focused on the kind of familial roles assumed by television characters. In these studies he found that women are more likely to give in and not make a fuss, while fathers and children were more likely to dissent.

Greenberg is not the only researcher to find an under-representation of minorities. In a 1983 study, Signorielli found that minorities were under-represented in prime-time programming. Two years later, Wilson and Gutierrez concluded that minorities were portrayed stereotypically in all entertainment programming. They found stereotypically negative representations of Native Americans, Asians, Hispanics, and African-Americans.

Gatekeeping Research

Gatekeeping has been a very popular topic for studies over the years, although most of these focus on news reporting more than other types of mass media output. While this topic is not directly applicable to this study of *TV Guide*, it is analogous. The idea of gatekeeping does apply to *TV Guide* in the sense that the magazine may be acting as a kind of gatekeeper through its support of certain types of programming. The magazine selects which programs to present in its "wrap-around" edition, while tossing many programs aside.

The most relevant gatekeeping study, perhaps, is Paul Snider's "Mr. Gates Revisited" study (1967). In this study, he found that one telegraph editor changed his editing practices over the years, presumably to meet public demand for information. While human interest stories and national politics were his main focus in White's 1949 study[2], international war news, crime and national economics were the leading categories he covered in 1966.

The world changed a lot between 1949 and 1966, requiring changes in newspaper output to provide consumers with needed and desired information. Human interest stories were not likely very important to newspaper readers in 1966. The Vietnam War and increasing crime rates became the focus of many Americans. "Mr. Gates" had to pick the stories he felt met consumer needs using the given size of the news-hole.

Another study with particular meaning for the present study is a 1979 study by Michael Ryan. He analyzed a group of scientific journalists as gatekeepers. Although the journalists' views did not agree with those of the scientists, they accurately perceived the differences in opinion about 75% of the time. They recognized that the scientists have different needs in terms of technical jargon, level of detail, etc. Despite personal differences, the gatekeepers took the audience (and, in some cases, the sources) into consideration when selecting and editing science news stories. *TV Guide*, in its own gatekeeping role, may not understand or agree with everything that the networks offer, but as good gatekeepers, its writers should recognize these differences.

Galtung and Ruge (1973) provided a good foundation for how a media gatekeeper should make decisions concerning what to print. They listed eight key factors that can help in news story selection, such as clarity, cultural proximity, relevance, consonance, and unusualness. While these particular items do not directly apply to television programming, parallels can be formed. As Galtung and Ruge's list suggests, the gatekeeper must meet the audience's needs. The same is true of television gatekeepers.

Culbertson discussed the "Traditional Newspaper Model" in a 1978 article, where he stated that an editor must process large amounts of information in a hurry and evaluate the audience's interests quickly and intuitively. *TV Guide*, as a television gatekeeper, must also process large amounts of information about new and ongoing programming.

Clarke and Evans (1980) discussed the need for various newspaper departments to work together for optimal gatekeeping. If there is no communication between the editorial staff and the newsroom, for example, the message of the newspaper may become distorted, resulting in reduced credibility. Once again, this theory applies to *TV Guide* as well.

Research Questions

With *TV Guide*'s potential to affect longevity of programs, as well as types of programs the networks decide to run, *TV Guide* may be as important to the "mainstreaming" theory as television itself. *TV Guide*, as a gatekeeper of television programming, may affect viewers' construction of social reality. In order to further explore *TV Guide*'s gatekeeping role, this study looked at the following:

1) Is there an association between *TV Guide*'s reviews in its Fall Preview Issues and series' longevity?

2) Does *TV Guide* tend to support certain genres of shows, while down-playing others?

3) Does *TV Guide* show race or gender bias in its support of shows?

4) Does *TV Guide* favor any of the networks?

5) Is there an association between *TV Guide*'s preferences and the amount of violence in the program?

Method

The Fall Preview Issue of *TV Guide* for the years 1958 to 1987 was used. The beginning date represents the first Fall Preview Issue that listed new shows individually.[3] The end date was selected to enable coding for whether a show returned for multiple television seasons (if 1994 were chosen, for example, the coder could not code for series longevity). The end date also represents the last Fall Preview Issue produced under the leadership of Walter Annenberg,[4] and the last year *TV Guide* covered only ABC, NBC, and CBS.[5] These issues of *TV Guide* were obtained from the Ohio University, Ohio State University, and Miami University libraries.

Using each Fall Preview Issue, a sheet was completed for each new program mentioned,[6] coding for network, number of mentions in entire issue, number of sentences devoted to each program, type of reference (i.e., favorable, unfavorable, or mixed), and any pictures or graphics that accompanied the show (See Appendix A for a sample coding sheet).[7] The fifth edition of *The Complete Directory to Prime Time Network TV Shows* was used to record the genre, the number of seasons a show lasted, and the demography of characters. Some items are self explanatory, but more difficult categories are described below.

Only those shows appearing on ABC, NBC, or CBS were used for this study. The only other network that aired during the period studied was FOX, which premiered in 1987, but *TV Guide* did not cover FOX's programs that year. Any series that did not appear in the reference guide under the title listed in *TV Guide* or under a similar title for the year in question were excluded.[8]

Each mention of a program in the national "wrap-around" section of *TV Guide* was included in the number-of-mentions count.[9] This included editorials, news briefs, and reviews of other shows. Program listings and picture captions were not counted.

After reading each reference, type of reference was coded based on explicit indicators, implied favorability, and tone. Some references were easy to code, while others were more difficult. If the reviewer made fun of plot, characters, or speech patterns, the type of reference was coded as Negative, for example. If both positive and negative comments were made, Mixed was selected.

Although *The Complete Directory* used more detailed genre identifiers, seven options were selected for this category. A key was used to code programs with more detailed program types: Variety programs included variety, musical variety, quiz shows, talent, and the like; Comedy included comedy, situation comedy, legal comedy/drama, and any genre with comedy as the first word of the title such as comedy drama; Drama was coded for programs with genres drama, legal drama, family drama, medical drama, and other non-violent drama programming; Crime Drama includes detective drama, police drama, war drama, and other drama programs with violence as central to the theme and action; Adventure was used for adventure, adventure/foreign intrigue, adventure/drama, and fantasy adventure; Science Fiction was used to code any program with science fiction included in the genre title; Western was used to code westerns; and Non-series or Informational included all programs that did not have a regular cast of characters, as well as documentaries, news magazines, commentary, other informational shows, sports, anthologies, and movies.[10] The name of the category as it appeared in *The*

Complete Directory, for example Courtroom Drama, was written on each sheet for future reference.

Each listing in *The Complete Directory* included the dates for first and last telecast, along with a detailed broadcast history. This information was used to code for number of years (or partial years) September to September a show ran; a show that ran for only part of a season was coded as an entire year.[11] The 1975 television season, for example, includes all programs that ran anytime between September 1975 and September 1976. For programs still on the air when the reference guide went to print in early 1992, the programming schedules from the 1992, 1993, and 1994 Fall Preview Issues of *TV Guide* were also used when determining longevity.

The various items dealing with demography were coded using a single method. Demographic breakdowns for the first five members of each original cast and title character were coded. The characters appear to be listed in *The Complete Directory* according to importance; they are not listed according to alphabetical order. Race was determined using indicators in the *TV Guide* reviews, the program synopsis and cross-references in *The Complete Directory*, and knowledge of the author and a test coder. For character demographics of first five characters, indeterminable was selected when race or gender was unclear. For each of the demographics listed (e.g., white male), the total number of characters in the given demographic group who appeared in the original cast (e.g., in the show "Happy Days" the original cast in 1974 had four white males listed in the first five characters: Richie, Fonzi, Mr. Cunningham, and Potsie) were coded. Only those characters appearing in the first season were coded for this category.[12] For demographic of Title Character, a single selection was made, rather than counting occurrences. Titles that included both men and women, or mixed races, such as *The Waltons* for example, were coded as Indeterminable/Uncodable.

Intercoder reliability, established on the basis of percentage of agreement, ranged from 78% for number of mentions in entire issue to 100% for year, network, any pictures, genre, character demography, and demography of title character. Overall intercoder reliability was 96% (Stempel and Westley 1991). Coding for testing intercoder reliability was completed by the author, a mass communication graduate student; another mass communication graduate student; and a chemical engineering undergraduate. All coding was completed by the author.

Results

In this study, 783 programs were reviewed. The number of shows per year ranged from fourteen in 1980 to forty-one in 1960, with an average of twenty-five per year. The only clear pattern in number of shows covered per year was that more programs were covered in the early years.

As indicated in Table 1 (see Appendix B for all tables), there was a statistically significant association between the type of reference in *TV Guide* and the number of years a show ran. There was a steady increase in the number of positive comments and a similar decrease in the number of negative comments as longevity increased. For programs lasting only one season, 46% of the reviews were positive while 53% were negative.[13] When number of seasons a show lasted increased to five or more years, the number of positive evaluations increased to nearly 67%, and negative mentions dropped to 33%.

Table 2 represents a similar association between number of mentions and type of reference. *TV Guide* was more likely to mention a program multiple times if the review was favorable; nearly 80% of shows receiving two mentions and 100% of shows receiving three or more mentions were reviewed favorably in *TV Guide*'s Fall Preview Issue. All programs mentioned three or more times received positive references. This further suggests the Fall Preview Issue served as a predictor of a program's longevity.

TV Guide strongly favored variety, comedy, drama, and science fiction programs over crime dramas, westerns, and adventures during this period, as depicted in Table 3. Variety, comedy, drama, and science fiction programs received positive analyses 63, 57, 65, and 83% of the time, respectively, while crime dramas were reviewed favorably 34% of the time, adventure programs received positive assessments at a rate of about 35%, and westerns had only 17% positive evaluations.

TV Guide improved its ability to predict longevity over time. Although the data for the first two decades was not statistically significant, the numbers do show an improvement over time, as shown in Tables 4, 5, and 6. During 1958 to 1967, programs received about 60% positive reviews regardless of the number of seasons they ran. The next ten-year period saw a drop in the number of positive mentions to 32% for programs that lasted less than one season and to 50% for programs lasting two or more seasons. In the final ten years of the study, 65% of the programs that lasted more than two seasons were given positive reviews.

No significant association was found between type of reference and gender or race, either overall or in specific periods. There were too few minority title characters to find any patterns; see Table 7. This was also true for crosstabs of type of reference by demography of first five characters as shown in Table 8. Although gender breakdowns provided greater numbers than race, only a slight bias toward women was evident. *TV Guide* was more likely to favor programs with female title characters than not with 60% of these programs receiving positive reviews; programs with male title characters received evenly split reviews.

TV Guide did not favor any of the three networks; each received equal positive and negative reviews for its programming.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results suggest that there is an association between *TV Guide*'s reviews of new programs and series' longevity, as queried in the first research question. The magazine improved its ability to serve as a predictor of longevity over time. This may be due to the magazine's increased knowledge of both the television market and the audience over time. It may also relate to *TV Guide*'s role as a gatekeeper. The networks may have learned to produce more shows that would be favored by *TV Guide*. An important question is: Did the magazine change its stance, or did the networks start producing shows that they knew *TV Guide* would support? Although the data does not clearly answer the question, it is likely that both contributed to some degree.

During the first two decades, both *TV Guide* and the television industry were testing their sea legs; they were still learning and growing. According to Altschuler and Grossvogel (1992), *TV Guide* adapted over the years. In the first decade, the magazine hoped for change in the medium, although it never openly attacked television. In later years, *TV Guide* began to understand that the audience was looking for programming that might not be in line with the magazine's ideals. In good gatekeeping form (Snider 1967), *TV Guide* recognized these differences of opinion for what they were and changed to fulfill the needs of its audience (Altschuler and Grossvogel 1992).

In answer to question two, there were, however, genres that the magazine tended to support over others. In the three decades studied, preference patterns indicated strong support for light-hearted programming rather than violence. These findings were expected due to the nature of the genres in question. Variety, comedy, and drama offer light, family-oriented entertainment usually, while crime dramas, adventures, and westerns tend to have more violence. Despite the magazine's mellowing toward programming, it stood against violence throughout the three decades studied (Altschuler and Grossvogel 1992).

Question three, which concerned race and gender bias, was answered negatively. There was no evidence that *TV Guide* showed gender or race bias in its coverage of programs, although Altschuler and Grossvogel (1992) felt both minorities and women were under-represented, and often misrepresented, in the magazine. The lack of evidence may be due in part to the small number of programs included in this study with minorities or women in title roles, and the even smaller number of minorities that appeared on television at all during the early years. The magazine would have had a difficult time talking about African-Americans, for example, if none was evident in the program offerings.

TV Guide was unbiased in its representation of shows from the three networks reviewed, as queried in question four. This may indicate that the magazine was not unduly influenced by any of the networks. Their programming choices appear to have been based on the series themselves. This also is an indication of its ability as a gatekeeper. There is a lot of information that must be processed quickly and effectively (Culbertson 1978), and by showing no bias to any of the networks, *TV Guide* gives all the networks equal time and support.

The fifth research question, which loosely relates to the question of genre favoritism, is answered affirmatively in the results of the first part of this study. Several mentions of violence were associated with negative references, while comedies tended to be praised for their "fun" or "humor." For example, in the review of "Charlie's Angels" in 1976, *TV Guide* refers to violence using ironic undertones: "Spelling/Goldberg Productions is using a lighter touch here than its *The Rookies*, *S.W.A.T.* and *Starksy & Hutch*. The only problems the girls have to contend with during the course of the Moonshadows case are a lecherous tennis pro, an asthmatic thug, a menacing sheriff, a murderous masseuse, one miscellaneous dirty old man, one horse stampede, two screeching car chases and three violent deaths." This statement epitomizes the stance taken by *TV Guide* concerning violent programming. While there were police dramas, adventures, and westerns that the magazine liked, these genres were panned more often than not.

The results of this study suggest that *TV Guide* does play gatekeeping role regarding television and that the magazine does its own "mainstreaming," although the "reality" it most often projects is not the traditional violence-laden programming discussed in television studies.

The world portrayed in the programs most often supported by *TV Guide* is not violent, rather it is calm and happy, and hardships are easily overcome. In this study, a bias in *TV Guide* toward comedy, drama, and variety shows was indicated. Comedy and drama have traditionally portrayed happy middle-class families in which good people always overcome hardships and problems. Variety programs, while not presenting happy families, do present happy subject matter--music and comedy sketches meant to make the audience laugh. Crime programming and adventure, the genres that often contain the over-represented violence on television, were rarely supported by *TV Guide*.

That is not the say that no violent programs are supported by the magazine. Over time, *TV Guide* has learned to recognize and understand what the audience wants, and as a good gatekeeper, has changed to meet the needs and desires of the audience. This change resulted in increased ability to predict longevity with each new decade studied.

TV Guide's lack of bias in coverage of the three networks further supports the magazine's ability as a gatekeeper. People watch programs on all the networks and want information about all of them. If *TV Guide* were to consistently attack one of the networks, the segment of the audience that watches could be offended and turn away from the magazine. It was expected that there might be a bias toward CBS, since the network had so many top-rated shows in the years studied.

Based on the results of this study, further research into *TV Guide*'s gatekeeping role is warranted. A more in-depth study about support of series over time might include both top-twenty-five and lower-ranking programs; a greater number of programs would also improve overall reliability of results. This study could focus on both the magazine's role in constructing social reality and its improved gatekeeping over time.

Another topic that deserves attention is *TV Guide*'s bias regarding gender and race. The results from this study were inconclusive due to the small number of programs with women and minorities in title roles. An interesting project would take a sample of those programs with women and minorities as title characters and look at how these programs were treated by *TV Guide*. Communication scholars should look at this long-ignored research topic, which could open another avenue of exploration with regard to television content and influence.

Notes

1. A longer version of this study, which included more details about the method and results, was presented at an annual AEJMC conference. See Jean Dye and Mark D. Harmon, Ignoring Change: An Evaluation of TV Guide Covers, 1970-79, Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Chicago, 1987. ERIC, ED 270 749.

2. The original study was completed by David Manning White in 1949. Another replicated study was completed by Glen L. Bleske in 1991; in this study he found a consistency in news coverage even when a woman is the gatekeeper. See David Manning White, "The 'Gatekeeper': A Case Study in the Selection of News," *Journalism Quarterly*, Fall 1950, 27:383-390; and Glen L. Bleske, "Ms. Gates Takes Over: An Updated Version of a 1949 Case Study," *Newspaper Research Journal*, Fall 1991, 12:88-97.

3. Although the Fall Preview Issue was first published in 1953, *TV Guide* divided the programming into categories such as situation comedy, western, etc. during the first five years. This made the task of coding new shows almost impossible because all shows, both new and old, were mixed in the same articles.

4. Annenberg, the founder of *TV Guide*, and Merrill Panitt, senior editor of the magazine since the first issue, were strong influences on the editorial content of the magazine. It is likely that the Fall Preview Issue changed as a result of the change in management. The first few years under second owner Rupert Murdoch were rather tumultuous, with people leaving the magazine one after the other.

5. Fox first aired in 1987, but did not have much affect during on the other networks in the first year.

6. This does not include programs, in later years, that were marked as "Early Starters." These shows were excluded because there were very few years that included this section.

7. No separate category was used for coding cover treatment because the Fall Preview Issue does not feature any programs or personalities. It simply has the issue title is large letters.

8. Some programs were grouped together as a single show, as in the case of the *Danny Thomas Show*. This listing included the title show, along with *Make Room for Daddy* and *Make Room for Grandaddy*. The synopsis attached to titles with multiple programs indicated when the series changed titles, major characters, etc. In these cases, only the information about the show in question was used (for example *Make Room for Daddy*), not the complete listing.

9. *TV Guide* is divided into two distinct sections: the national wrap-around edition and the local listings. The national wrap-around contains the features about the new season, so only that portion of the magazine was used. Articles appearing in the local editions vary.

10. Originally, all drama programming was coded in a single category. The researcher later went back and split these programs into two categories to allow for further targeting of *TV Guide*'s views toward programming where crime is integral to the plot of the program.

11. A program might have been cancelled or been sent of hiatus for the remainder of a season. However, these programs were included as a full-year to keep from using partial years.

12. Characters who did not appear for the entire run of the show had dates next to their names in the reference guide. Only those characters in the top five with no dates listed or the original year included in the dates listed were included in this count.

13. All percentages are rounded for use in the text.

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APPENDIX A - *Coding Sheet for Analysis 1*

1. Case number ____01-04/

Coded from TV Guide

2. Name of Show ______________________________

3. Year (YY) __05-06/

4. Network 1 = ABC 2 = NBC 3 = CBS _07/

5. Number of mentions in entire issue (00-99) _08-09/

6. Number of sentences devoted to this program (00-999) ___10-12/

7. Type of Reference _13/

1 = Positive
2 = Negative
3 = Mixed
4 = Indifferent

8. Are there one or more pictures/graphics for this show? _14/

1 = Yes
2 = No

Coded from The Complete Directory to Prime Time Network TV Shows, 5th edition

9. Genre _15/

1 = Variety
2 = Comedy
3 = Drama
4 = Adventure
5 = Science Fiction
6 = Western
7 = non-series or informational
8 = crime drama

____

10. Number of Years Show Ran (00-99) __16-17/

11. Character Demographics for top five characters (00-05)

White Male _18/
Black Male _19/
Other Race Male _20/
White Female _21/
Black Female _22/
Other Race Female _23/
Non-human (non-human alien or cartoon) ________ _24/
Indeterminable _25/

12. Demographic of title character (if any) _26/

1 = White Male
2 = Black Male
3 = White Female
4 = Black Female
5 = Other Race Male
6 = Other Race Female
7 = Non-human
8 = Indeterminable/Uncodable
9 = No title character

APPENDIX B - *Tables*

TABLE 1: Type of reference and program longevity[1]

	≤ 1 season	2 to 4 seasons	≥ 5 seasons
Positive #	118	52	42
%	46.1%	54.2%	66.7%
Negative #	138	44	21
%	53.9%	45.8%	33.3%
Total #	256	96	63
%	100%	100%	100%

Chi Square = 9.03 V = .14758 df=2 p<.01

[1] Based on positive and negative reviews only.

TABLE 2: Type of reference and number of mentions[1]

	1 mention	2 mentions	≥ 3 mentions
Positive #	112	90	11
%	38.5%	78.9%	100%
Negative #	179	24	0
%	61.5%	21.1%	N/A
Total #	291	114	11
%	100%	100%	100%

Chi Square = 64.4 V = .39356 df=2 p<.00001

[1] Based on positive and negative reviews only.

TABLE 3: Genre and type of reference[1]

	Positive		Negative		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
variety	12	63.2%	7	36.8%	19	100%
comedy	91	57.2%	68	42.8%	159	100%
drama	36	65.5%	19	34.5%	55	100%
crime	20	33.9%	39	66.1%	59	100%
adventure	17	34.7%	32	65.3%	49	100%
sci fi	5	83.3%	1	16.7%	6	100%
western	5	16.7%	25	83.3%	30	100%
other	27	69.2%	12	30.8%	39	100%

Chi Square = 42.16 V = .31835 df=7 p<.00001

[1] Based on positive and negative references only.

TABLE 4: Type of reference and program longevity 1958-1967[1]

		≤1 season	≥2 seasons
Positive	#	62	49
	%	56.9%	59.8%
Negative	#	42	33
	%	40.4%	40.2%
Total	#	104	82
	%	100%	100%

Not Significant

[1] Based on positive and negative references only.

TABLE 5: Type of reference and program longevity 1968-1977[1]

		≤1 season	≥2 seasons
Positive	#	25	17
	%	32.5%	50.0%
Negative	#	52	17
	%	68.5%	50.0%
Total	#	77	34
	%	100%	100%

Not Significant

[1] Based on positive and negative references only.

TABLE 6: Type of reference and program longevity 1978-1987[1]

		≤1 season	≥2 seasons
Positive	#	31	28
	%	41.3%	65.1%
Negative	#	44	15
	%	58.7%	34.9%
Total	#	75	43
	%	100%	100%

Chi Square = 6.18357 phi = .22892 df=1 p<.01289

[1] Based on positive and negative references only.

TABLE 7: Type of reference and race of title character[1]

		white	minority
Positive	#	100	4
	%	51.5%	57.1%
Negative	#	94	3
	%	48.5%	42.9%
Total	#	194	7
	%	100%	100%

Not Significant

[1] Based on positive and negative references only, and non-human or indeterminable characters were not included.

TABLE 8: Type of reference and gender of title character[1]

		Male	Female
Positive	#	77	27
	%	49.4%	60.0%
Negative	#	79	18
	%	48.5%	42.9%
Total	#	156	45
	%	100%	100%

Not Significant

[1] Based on positive and negative references only, and non-human or indeterminable characters were not included.

Missing Voices in the Civic/Public Journalism Debates: "I Never Thought a Newspaper Could Ask 'What If?'" and Other Citizen-Reader Observations

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A paper accepted by the Civic Journalism Interest Group of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication for presentation at the Association's 1995 convention in Washington, DC, August 11, 1995.

Missing Voices in the Civic/Public Journalism Debates: "I Never Thought a Newspaper Could Ask 'What If?'" and Other Citizen-Reader Observations

Journalists attempting to reconnect with citizens to improve public discussion and to try to make public life go well are practicing a form of journalism that is called public, or civic.[1] As these civic/public journalism practices take root across the United States and its proponents hone their theoretical base,[2] journalists from major newspapers are weighing in against these practices. Harwood writes that this sort of journalism "endangers the credibility of newspapers by repudiating the 'objectivity' and 'fairness' principles that for half a century have been a lodestar of American journalism."[3] Goodman called it an "appalling idea that is bound to compromise coverage, the sort of effort...that relies on good intentions instead of enterprising, sustained, independent reporting."[4]

The opposition has spread to the heart of the country. G. Woodson Howe, editor of the Omaha World Herald, warned his readers last Christmas Day about a new buzzword in the business: "'Public journalism,' where reader

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I thank David Nord and two anonymous reviewers for helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper and the Graduate School and Bureau of Media Research at Indiana University for support for this research.

[1] Rosen, J. (1994). Behind public journalism. APME Readership Committee Report: Public Journalism: What it means, who is practicing it, how it is done. 4.

[2] Rosen, J. & Merritt, D., Jr. (1994). Public journalism: Theory and practice. Dayton, OH: The Kettering Foundation.

[3] Harwood, R. (17 January 1994). Civic journalism 101. Washington, DC: The Washington Post. A19.

[4] Goodman, W. (22 March 1995). Walter Cronkite with an assessment of TV news. New York, NY: The New York Times.

committees decide what goes into the paper and advocacy replaces objectivity."[5]

A missing voice in the civic/public journalism debates is that of the "public." I use the term "citizen-reader" for this public, people who are active in civic or public life in their communities and who are readers of their local newspapers, the content of which may appeal to their active citizenship and to their amusement or consumer interests.[6] These people themselves do not use the words "civic journalism" or "public journalism" when they talk about the journalism of the newspaper that serves their community.

Citizen-readers view the newspaper from the context of community life rather than the context of the profession. I will argue that they welcome the newspaper's participation in community life and say this increases the newspaper's credibility. They expect accurate, fair reporting. Their criticism of the newspaper's objectivity came from a holistic sense of community: They want a more objective view of the entire community, not just the "bad" news perspective that seems to permeate news accounts. They called this "balance."

Method

The data for this paper come from a larger study of the relationship between The Sun and its community. In particular, the data consist of participant-observation in the newsroom and community during three months in the spring of 1993; documentation in the form of editorials, newspaper stories, volumes of local history, census and economic trends; and 49 face-to-face audiotape-recorded interviews, which ran from 45 minutes to nearly two hours. The average interview was an hour. Twenty-three of these interviews were non-journalists; seventeen of them had been involved in at least one project The Sun organized. They were from all areas of the peninsula and had lived in the area from five years to a lifetime. The other twenty-six interviews were with news workers and managers. The interview questions were open-ended.[7] The constant comparison method of analysis was used on interview transcriptions to discover patterns of response. Forty-five participants gave written permission for the use of their names in articles connected with this study; the remaining four requested pseudonyms.

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[5] Howe, G. W. (25 December 1994). Change needed, but retain fundamentals. Omaha, NE: Omaha World Herald. 2A.

[6] Rosen (Theory, 1994) makes a distinction between "reader" and "citizen." (See page 16.) The former connotes a user of a product, a customer of a business and the latter connotes membership in a community, he argues. I use the term "citizen-reader" to connote a niche market for citizenship, just as newspapers have niche markets for sports, business, cultural and other news genres.

Context

Kitsap peninsula, with approximately 205,000 residents, lies west across Puget Sound from Seattle and east of the pristine, sparsely populated Olympic Peninsula.[8] Kitsap's economy is heavily dependent upon the military: In 1993, the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, the area's largest employer with 12,000 workers, two other Navy bases and scores of U.S. Department of Defense subcontractors provided the majority of jobs.[9]

The Sun, a daily newspaper based in Bremerton, the largest city on Kitsap peninsula with a population of about 38,000, served a three-county area. The newspaper's circulation was 40,000 in early 1993 in an area that included Bremerton, Indian reservations, small towns and a vast unincorporated area containing the majority of the population. Competition for advertising came primarily from five weekly newspapers, three radio stations and the Yellow Pages. Seattle newspapers, television and radio provided competition for readers' time.

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[7] See Appendix A for the interview questions.

[8] See map, Attachment A.

[9] Economic Development Council of Kitsap County. (1993, March). Kitsap County economic growth indicators. Kitsap County, WA. 1-3.

In 1989, a new team of editors arrived at The Sun. Within a year, they had redesigned the entire newspaper, added a Sunday edition and developed "products" aimed at segments of the market: young people, older people and outdoorspeople. "Forum," a section on public affairs, appeared in the Sunday edition, and carried a page of letters to the editor. Weekdays, The Sun allotted a quarter to a third of a page to letters to the editor. As more people in the community voiced their opinions in the letters section, The Sun's editorial voice faded. Mike Phillips, the editor, wrote occasional rather than daily editorials.

To create a sense of collective identity among its far-flung subscribers, The Sun designated the Kitsap and Olympic peninsulas "West Sound," a name signifying geographic and aesthetic opposition to Seattle and its paved-over suburbs. West Sound was not a cartographic designation, but the name stuck. The Sun first labeled one inside news page "West Sound," then expanded the designation to an entire news section.

From 1989 to 1993, The Sun tackled three projects to further a collective identity on the peninsula. The Hood Canal, which forms the western boundary of Kitsap peninsula, provided a topic for enterprise reporting. Massive numbers of fish had not died in the canal. Nor had a tanker run ashore and dumped petroleum. No toxic spills had been detected. Yet, development along the canal had increased. Septic tanks leaked into it. Shellfish beds were being slowly poisoned. Water quality was declining. The

Sun produced a year-long series worthy of the immense water itself, then turned the series into a book, Hood Canal: Splendor at Risk.[10]

Another project evolved from a Sun editorial praising citizen efforts to save a forest.[11] Early in 1991, a group of citizens had halted a deal with developers that the state's Department of Natural Resources wanted to make that would have resulted in the loss of a much-loved forest in southern Kitsap County. The citizens then started talking about how much money it would take to buy that forest. One county commissioner publicly lamented that the bond issue the county was floating for parks and recreation was a paltry $10 million. He said the county could probably spend three or four times that amount.

The Sun's editor amplified that sentiment in a mid-week editorial. "It would take voter approval to float a bond issue of $40 million or so, and bond issues are hard to swallow. . . . We believe those people 'out in Olalla' made a spark that has ignited public support for open land conservation. There's a great power in such unity. Power that should not be wasted on small visions."[12]

A few days later, Ed Sheldon, president and chief executive officer of the National Bank of Bremerton, enlisted Phillips' help in educating the community about open space preservation. Sheldon said the previous community record for raising money was about $2 million for the new YMCA, a campaign he had chaired.[13] He thought raising money for open space preservation in Kitsap County was "doable."

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[10] Brody, J. (Ed.). (1991). Hood Canal: Splendor at risk. Bremerton, WA.: The Sun Newspaper.

[11] Phillips, M. (25 July 1991). Kitsap has won time in DNR flap; what an opportunity. Bremerton, WA.: The Sun.

[12] Phillips, 25 July 1991.

[13] Sheldon, E. (29 April 1993). Interview with the author, Bremerton, WA.

Eventually, some 150 volunteers organized 50 community meetings around open space and invited residents to propose parcels of land for preservation. Phillips toured the county with what he called "a visual backgrounder," slides of open spaces—hiking and horseback-riding trails, rows of trees along highways, playgrounds and golf courses, wetlands and parks.[14]

Phillips estimated that a thousand people drew up a plan for open space preservation in Kitsap County. "Volunteer power has brought Kitsap County to the doorstep of an ambitious, intelligent and achievable open space plan," he wrote.[15] In this editorial, he also noted that the amount of the bond proposal was still to be determined, an amount that should be "big enough to make a real difference, small enough to pass." Phillips' participation in open space ended with the drafting of the citizens' open space plan. The Sun published a special twelve-page, four-color tab describing this plan.[16] In September 1992, Kitsap County voters defeated by a few percentage points the $70 million bond proposal for open space. Phillips said of the experience:

> People who normally would be expected to be in conflict had never in the past worked together with a common purpose. I really saw the open space initiative not as an open space initiative but as a chance to get people to act like a community. Sort of show them how, lead them through the process. Let them see that they could do it. And I think that that really registered with a lot of people. A lot of people came up and said that they might do some other things that way.[17]

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[14] Phillips, M. (28 April 1993). Interview with the author, Bremerton, WA.

[15] Phillips, M. (31 May 1992). Just a few more numbers. Bremerton, WA: The Sun.

[16] McCormick, J. (1992, June). Open space: A passion for the land. A rare opportunity to preserve Kitsap's beauty for future generations. Bremerton, WA: The Sun. 1-12.

[17] Phillips interview.

In 1993, many of these volunteers were still working for open space preservation. They had started an organization, Friends of Open Space, to continue this activity.[18]

A third project focused on economic diversification. Bill Clinton's election in 1992 rekindled conversations about Kitsap County's economy. Clinton had pledged to reduce the Department of Defense if elected. The Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission was already at work. For years, community leaders in Kitsap County had discussed the need to create a more diversified economy, but they had not acted. The Department of Defense payroll served the community well; there was little need to develop employment alternatives. In early 1993, however, people knew they needed to act. Mike Phillips, The Sun's general manager and its advertising director joined these renewed conversations about the community's economic future. What could the community do to diversify its economic base? Community leaders decided to put this question to residents.

While leaders met to plan an economic diversification summit, Sun reporter Gina Binole identified five communities that had diversified their economies, from nearby Spokane, Washington, to the Hampton Roads area of Virginia, She visited these communities to interview, research and write a series of articles. What had worked? What had not? Which local resources had been retooled to fit the new economy? The Sun published the series of articles this work generated under the label, "The Cry to Diversify."[19]

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[18] Smith, D. (12 April 1993). Interview with the author, Bremerton, WA.

[19] Binole, G. (14 March 1993). Broadening the base: How other cities have charted new courses. The Sun, A1. (15 March 1993). Gathering momentum: Eastern Washington city creates a "United Way for business." The Sun, A1. (16 March 1993). A community's college: Boise State University a magnet for business. The Sun, A1. (17 March 1993). Don't worry, be happy: Laid-back Bozeman needs no boost. The Sun, A1. (21 March 1995). "It's a jungle out there:" Virginia shipyards fighting for survival; and Military "build down" translates as growth. The Sun, A1.

Meanwhile, planners sought a diverse group of summit participants. They invited 250 high school students, retirees, labor and management personnel, environmentalists and developers, entrepreneurs and professionals, elected officials and school employees, and ensured women and minorities were on the invitation list in significant numbers. Participants learned about their county's housing, education, economic and general demographic trends during a half day session in early March 1993.[20] They went home with a stack of reading materials—homework for the next summit session, two weeks hence. They were asked to grapple with such central questions as: What do we want our community to look like? How do we want to live together? What kinds of jobs do we want and where do we want them?

The second summit session coincided with the publication of the final story in Binole's front-page "The Cry to Diversify" series. Participants referred specifically to Spokane's or Boise's efforts to diversify, adapting some of the ideas they had read about in the newspaper. The growth-at-any-cost people debated the not-in-my-backyard people. Citizen priorities were combined and ranked. A steering committee to handle the "What next?" issues then began its work. In a speech to summit participants, Phillips asked them to keep the conversations going, to return to their communities to talk with their neighbors about the issues they had debated and the directions they wanted to grow.

(22 March 1995). Northeast seeks a new economy: Maine campaigns to keep Navy yard open; and Closed Air Force Base key to future dreams. The Sun, A1.

[20] The author attended both sessions of the Kitsap County Economic Diversification Summit and participated in the working group on Public Involvement, Education and Support.

The newspaper covered both summit sessions on the front page.[21] It also continued to cover the activities of the summit's transition team. Six months later, The Sun announced the community's approval for $150,000 in defense department conversion grants, competitive awards from the federal and state governments.[22]

Patterns

In interviews about their community and The Sun, citizen-readers said they wanted a newspaper that connected them with other people, issues and ideas; that exhibited leadership; that was a part of, rather than apart from, community life; and that empowered them to participate in community life. They also wanted intelligent, accurate reporting and "balanced" news, which, in their view, contained stories of conflict resolution as well as of conflict. They expected to learn what was wrong in their communities; they also wanted to know what was working, what was going well. These ideas are explored in more detail, illuminated with excerpts from transcribed interviews.[23]

Connection

The influx of active and retired military personnel and out-of-staters looking for less expensive housing and a higher quality of life compounded the problem of disparate towns and isolated villages on the Kitsap peninsula. Bremerton had the largest employer in the area; Silverdale, which was a few stores at a crossroads only a decade earlier, had become the shopping magnet;

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[21] Swanson, J. (10 March 1993). Brainstorming for the future; county must learn to sell itself. The Sun, A1. (23 March 1993). Beyond military glory days: Community warned defense cuts will hit home. The Sun, A1. (24 March 1993). Hammering out plan of action: Ideas for the future. The Sun, A1.

[22] Swanson, J. (30 October 1993). Feds, state give county $150,000. The Sun. A1.

[23] These excerpts have been edited to eliminate repetition and redundancy.

and Port Orchard was the seat of county government. Bainbridge Islanders voted to become a city to divorce themselves from county oversight.

Citizen-readers wanted to connect with other people, ideas and issues on the peninsula. They said The Sun, the only daily newspaper serving the peninsula, could help them do this. Bill Parnell, a self-professed private-property rights person and a developer in the Kingston area of north Kitsap peninsula for 25 years, talked about one role of the newspaper:

> I guess the newspaper informs you what's going on in the community, right or wrong. Then you have something to start a conversation with your neighbor—"Oh, did you read the paper where so and so did this?" I think maybe that does have a tendency to pull people together and talk about things, too. And there again you're back to the local news as what's doing this.[24]

Sandy Carlson, a lifelong Bremerton resident who directed the Kitsap Regional Library's central branch services, said The Sun's published calendar of events and the listings for social, civic and recreational activities helped let people know what they have in common. Carlson suggested other needs for connection. . . . "Maybe expand that so people know about one another more. Know about the common problems that we have."[25]

The Sun brought people together for face-to-face discussions about open space and economic diversification; citizen-readers said the physical newspaper also brought people together. Mike Hill, a Californian who had moved to Silverdale in 1987, directed transportation services for Johnson Controls, an 800-employee subcontractor at Bangor Submarine Base, said:

> What we're talking about here is building up the community through the use of the newspaper. You know—the good things that are happening in the schools and why. Why this area chose not to have a development move in here because we want to preserve the natural

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[24] Parnell, B. (13 April 1993). Interview with the author, Kingston, WA.
[25] Carlson, S. (1 April 1993). Interview with the author, Bremerton, WA.

> resources of that area. Why the community is working toward these goals, you know? Build up the community. Build up the self-esteem of everybody who lives here. We need to bring people together.[26]

Barbara Cooper, his colleague at Johnson Controls, added: "We have to have information about the community to feel a part of it." A lifelong resident of Poulsbo, Cooper had a history of public participation. While her children were in school, she attended school board meetings. Now responsible for 150 employees who traveled to work from all parts of the peninsula, she was symbolically a part of the entire peninsula. She wanted broader information about

> what's going on in the various communities. What's being discussed at the city council meeting? Is it something that's going to affect us? Probably. Do I care what's going on in Port Orchard? Yes, because it may hit Poulsbo. Or maybe we've already had that. Somebody is going to care.[27]

Many citizen-readers did not know about the smaller communities that made up the whole peninsula nor did they have a good idea of what the whole looked like. Don Pratt, a lifelong resident of Bainbridge Island and director of community development for the city of Bremerton, said it was important for Kitsap residents to have a vision of the greater community so they might better understand themselves. He recalled a series he had read in a Seattle newspaper about that city's neighborhoods:

> (The series) clearly defined what that neighborhood was all about. And I think things like that would work in Kitsap as we become more diverse from community to community. Identifying what those neighborhoods are and talking about them would change people's orientation and self-vision. I think that's what newspapers can do. People do that on their own with neighborhood newsletters or posters on the bulletin board of the coffee shop. Well, all the newspaper is is a more

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[26] Hill, M. 5 April 1993). Interview with the author, Bangor Submarine Base, WA.

[27] Cooper, B. (5 April 1993). Interview with the author, Bangor Submarine Base. WA.

> complex, technical, larger thing to convey that same sense of community.[28]

According to these citizen-readers, as the only daily newspaper serving the peninsula, The Sun could be a better connection place for people in the greater community. It could show them their similarities, their problems and the solutions they were developing. It could let them know about the agendas of public bodies so they could decide whether to participate in these meetings. It could help them understand changes in community life.

Leadership

One of the things citizen-readers praised about The Sun's projects was its leadership. These pleasantly surprised some people. Others called the newspaper "activist" and said they appreciated this quality. Still others, although they did not particularly agree with some of The Sun's activities, welcomed the public discussions they encouraged.

A lifelong resident of the area and real estate businessman, Jerry Reid said ten years ago he had had a different view of what a newspaper could do:

> They were doing one job, and that was reporting news. Period. I didn't see any leadership. And I guess that I'd never thought that a newspaper had—I won't say a duty but—a possibility of playing 'what if' or throwing out ideas. We just didn't have that.[29]

One of Mike Phillips' strengths, Reid said, was introducing ideas. "They're saying 'Can we? Can we?' rather than just blasting with 'Here's the news.'" Reid said he found this refreshing.

Warren Olson, a former administrator in the Central Kitsap school district, had served as president of the Silverdale Chamber of Commerce and was an organizer during the open space campaign. Olson worked with The

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[28] Pratt, D. (2 April 1993). Interview with the author, Bremerton, WA.

[29] Reid, J. (23 April 1993). Interview with the author, Bremerton, WA.

Sun's managers on the economic diversification summit. He called The Sun a "community activist newspaper" and applauded its efforts:

> What I like about the community activist newspaper, what it's done well, is that there's a person there who has an enormous amount of information about an issue, who has researched it thoroughly, who has the staff that is objective in researching this, and who brings to the decision this background of information and intelligence. . . . that can then sift out, so that we're not dealing with what I call "noise," spurious voices out there crying in the wilderness that get so much publicity.
>
> And it irritates me no end as I watch national news—I guess I'm very critical—there's nothing that keeps a real fool from being in the media. And it astonishes me some days what credence we give to those voices. That's why sometimes a community activist newspaper, they sift that out. There's an opinion there that puts that in perspective for people.[30]

Olson and his fellow citizen-readers admire The Sun's activism and if they were to call what the newspaper does "advocacy" journalism, which is the charge of civic/public journalism's critics, they would say it advocates intelligent, informed participation in community life. Ed Sheldon, the Bremerton banker, spoke philosophically about the newspaper's leadership role in advocating this:

> There is too much of the "there is nothing I can really do about that" prevalent throughout the world. And the old "let George do it" is really operative. We all have a part to play if we are to come together and be a better place.
>
> I am somewhat aware of how people are supposed to get their information in the 21st century. It's supposed to come up on their computer screen or their television screen, and I suspect that that will happen. But the need for the conscionable journalist should never go away. The First Amendment is a burdensome thing to live with. But it would be more burdensome without it.
>
> Newspapers won't go away. There is something intrinsic within the spirit that God has given all of us that, whether we attend to it or not,

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[30] Olson, W. (16 April 1993). Interview with the author, Silverdale, WA.

> needs to be confronted with truth. Needs to be confronted with alternatives. Decision makers want to be informed. They want to be informed by intelligent people who write intelligently. And that need will not go away, God forbid that it ever would. Because what you replace it with are propagandists.[31]

Citizen-readers understand the difference between advocating a particular position—it's called editorializing—and reporting the news. Sandy Carlson, the librarian, reiterated the distinction:

> After all, a newspaper is not a not-for-profit information sharer that's required to make a balanced presentation for everything. Unlike the public library, where we're supposed to have two sides of every issue.
>
> So, I think it's good for The Sun to take a point of view. I'm pleased that they support the literacy council. I'm pleased that they did the open space thing. I'm pleased when they support school bond issues. I think it's their job to support the things that are good for the community. I'm glad to see The Sun taking a point of view about those things. I think it's the role of the newspaper on their editorial pages. It still has a responsibility to accurately report the news.[32]

The open space project, in which The Sun's editor was highly visible, garnered some criticism from citizen-readers. Don Pratt disagreed with the open space bond initiative, but he said he was not against open space preservation:

> I think it (the open space campaign) was helpful. I value the debate that occurred. It's still occurring. It raised open space in people's minds, so it's an issue now. I think it's a valid thing. But that particular concept (the bond issue) needed to get defeated and let something else happen. So I think it's positive. And the newspaper helped shape it. But I think the editor's role is an interesting study.[33]

Citizen-readers acknowledged the newspaper's ability to focus community attention on a particular issue. Jerry Reid had been convening meetings of leaders from community minority groups for almost two years.

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[31] Sheldon interview.
[32] Carlson interview.
[33] Pratt interview.

Every other Friday people met in his office for sandwiches and talk about discrimination, people's aspirations, their need to enter the mainstream, to gain access to higher status positions. Overcoming racial prejudice in the community was a goal Reid said probably would not occur in his lifetime. But he remained optimistic. He said The Sun and its editor gave him hope:

> We're getting some input that we hadn't had before. And the racial issue is one. The open space issue. The Hood Canal. The projects that Mike sees to take a stand on. Little by little we're learning more about them, and I think his philosophy is that sooner or later we're going to know enough about those issues that the people are going to come together and say, "OK. We hadn't thought about this, but there is something there and maybe we should be thinking about it." And it's just like sparking an interest in a child's mind. You can see all of a sudden the light appears. And I think that the light is appearing in a lot of our community's lives.[34]

Citizen-readers did not want the newspaper to tell them what to do or how to think. They wanted it show leadership, to spot issues and help people resolve them. They welcomed the newspaper's research on community issues. Several commented about the resources The Sun expended on "The Cry to Diversify" series. For some, this was a way the newspaper put something back into the community.

A part of the community, not apart from it

One of the themes that runs through these conversations is the belief that people must contribute something to the community if they take from the community. Jerry Reid, for example, asks his 75 employees to volunteer in the community with the PTA or Little League or at the Y. He said it did not matter to him what they did, as long as they participated. If everyone shared this philosophy, he said, they would have a better community.[35]

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[34] Reid interview.

[35] Reid interview.

Kim McNamara, campus director of the Eton Technical Institute, had had her job for a year although she had lived on the peninsula more than ten years. She had a philosophy similar to Reid's:

> You have to give to a community. To be part of it you have to give to it. If you don't need to have a voice, you don't care what goes on in that community. You're not going to participate because you don't care. You're not going to make a commitment to it. But to the extent that the decisions made in that community start to impact your living situation, you want to participate—and you want to have a voice.[36]

Citizen-readers thought it was important for the newspaper to contribute to the community, too. Dain Nysoe worked for the public schools in south Kitsap County, finished a master's degree in pubic administration and moved into a job as director of marketing for the Kitsap Pavilion, a meeting, concert and festival facility. Nysoe talked about The Sun's participation in community life:

> I would give The Sun very high marks for that. Over and above what it used to be. Previously it was difficult to get them to take a position one way or the other, or to become visibly, or vocally, involved in community issues, to the extent that the current Sun is in taking positions on open space, getting involved in diversification, sponsoring events for the community.
>
> And those things, from a newspaper standpoint—I don't care whether it's The Sun or whether it's the New York Times or the LA Times—putting something back into the community, I think, is a necessity. Because they (The Sun) are part of the community—a very important part of the community. A very important part of the communication link in the community. Unless that newspaper is involved in what's going on in the community, how do they expect to be an effective communication tool?[37]

Some citizen-readers equated more participation of The Sun in community life with better understanding of community life. They said the newspaper got the facts right, but didn't understand what was really going on.

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[36] McNamara, K. (2 April 1993). Interview with the author, Gorst, WA.

[37] Nysoe, D. (26 April 1993). Interview with the author, Bremerton, WA.

Peter Best, a junior at Central Kitsap High School, said reporters who covered the schools didn't really understand what was happening in them because they didn't spend enough time there. If you're there, he said, you understand what's happening. "Otherwise you cover the surface. If you're really involved, you know the insider stuff. And I don't see what's wrong with that."[38] Citizen-readers wanted accurate, trustworthy reporting. Participating in community life, they said, could help ensure that trustworthiness.

Empowerment

Don Pratt said the military mindset prevalent in Kitsap kept people from seeing their potential to change anything. The headquarters of the major employer was thousands of miles away, which conditioned people to their powerlessness in bureaucracy.[39] Mary Ellen McCaffree expanded upon this theme. From her years as a Washington state legislator, McCaffree knew about power and political involvement. A retiree from electoral politics, she lived in the northernmost town on the peninsula. She had been a volunteer in the open space campaign and a participant in the economic diversification summit:

> People don't understand that when you're talking about politics it means that you should be getting involved in what's going on in the community. They think that politics means that the politicians are behind closed doors and are making all the decisions. They don't understand that in a democratic form of government, people have to get in there and work for it.
>
> We tried very hard to get people (in the open space campaign) to realize that not only were they a part of their own small community, but they were a part of a larger community and that we all needed to work together. It was fabulous to me the way people from all over the county came together and put together an open space plan.[40]

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[38] Best, P. (12 April 1993). Interview with the author, Bremerton, WA.

[39] Pratt interview.

[40] McCaffree, M. E. (22 April 1993). Interview with the author, Hansville, WA.

McCaffree envisioned an expanded role for The Sun—that of empowering citizens to take a more active role in community life. She said people needed to learn that they were in charge:

> I feel strongly that The Sun has a real role in not only presenting to the people all sides of issues but also giving them a sense of belonging and a sense of the fact that it's their responsibility and their duty to get in here and make the decisions.[41]

Some people in smaller communities were already taking charge of decision-making. They needed The Sun for another reason. These communities lacked an outlet to discuss issues in the broader community, said Vicky Rauh, a 15-year resident of Bainbridge Island. She worked for the island's Chamber of Commerce. The many smaller communities needed a way to reach the entire peninsula:

> Some of those people (in unincorporated areas) don't want the world to know where they're at. But because of the Growth Management Act (a state law) and some of the ordinances that are being written by the county, people have gotten more active, and they want to protect their rights. They would like a voice, and they would like a newspaper to carry that voice.[42]

Terry Bergeson, executive director of Central Kitsap schools, worked with families in her district and witnessed firsthand the impact of the physical, economic and intellectual changes occurring on the peninsula. She worried about the loss of a values base, which she said was the heart of community: Seeing people as your neighbor, respecting people, caring about other people and realizing that your future is also their future. She talked about the newspaper and empowerment:

> Somehow the newspaper as one of the community entities needs to make people feel powerful about creating their future. You know? It's like, how does the newspaper empower people? And maybe it's with really

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[41] McCaffree interview.

[42] Rauh, V. (9 April 1993). Interview with the author, Winslow, WA.

> good information. It's a communication tool. And a knowledge tool. Instead of just communicating data at people, pulling that information together and having the kinds of discussions about the values of community and what does that mean?[43]

One thing that bothered citizen-readers like Bergeson was the newspaper's reporting of conflict, which is a staple of U.S. news. Why not report on conflict resolution, she asked rhetorically. Some people framed this as a difference between publishing "bad" and "good" news. They did not expect community cheerleading from the newspaper. They wanted to know what was wrong in the community, but they also yearned to know what was right. They wanted an objective report of the whole community.

Balance

One topic that surfaced in many interviews was that of "bad" news. Citizen-readers said that the newspaper highlighted the negative and downplayed the positive. They called this a lack of balance in the news. Some chalked this up to "the way journalism is." Despite his enthusiasm for The Sun's projects and its participation in community life, Jerry Reid said:

> I guess I always felt that a newspaper spends too much time on the negative and not enough time on the positive. I've got to give The Sun credit because they do spend a lot of time on the positive, but it seems like the negative at times gets bigger headlines, front page headlines, and the follow-up or the good stuff, gets pushed to the back. Other than say the big projects. And that's maybe just journalism.
>
> But I'd like to see the billings of the kids in the community that do well. I'd like to see them get top billing as compared to the kids that have a scrape or a problem with the law. That is a delicate line, I'm sure, for a newspaper to handle, and I'm sure that they go out of their way to recognize the leadership and the good points. But the news is the kids who do something wrong. Not only kids, but adults also.[44]

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[43] Bergeson, T. (20 April 1993). Interview with the author, Silverdale , WA.

[44] Reid interview.

The Sun slighted the things that enable people to have a better understanding of community life. The things that didn't fall under the label "news" were overlooked. Vicky Rauh said:

> There's lots of wonderful things that are happening in Bremerton, too, and you're not even hearing about those things. I have a problem with newspapers in that respect. There isn't a good enough balance for me to feel real comfortable about saying that they understand what community is about. They may understand it, but they aren't reporting it.[45]

Citizen-readers wanted a more engaged newspaper and recognized the journalistic difficulty The Sun faced in participating in community life. They expected thoughtful, intelligent, complete and objective reporting, which included giving "good" things as much prominence in the newspaper as "bad." They wanted a newspaper with vitality. Dain Nysoe said:

> To my thinking, reporting is merely reacting to something that's happened: "This happened, and now we're going to report it." So you are reactive as opposed to proactive. And I'm looking at the paper being proactive. Finding out what's involved, what's in the community's interest. Maybe having community forums and saying, "Okay community, The Sun would like some feedback. What are your interests? What do you want us to pursue? What are the real issues facing Kitsap County today? And how can The Sun help?"
>
> And The Sun has to be able to balance the interests of the community against objective journalism, too. And sometimes that's difficult, but that's The Sun's problem. What I'm looking at is how they can enhance the community or help build the community. I think they need to get involved more. Make themselves more readily available. And be open to different ideas.[46]

Discussion

Some journalists have framed the debate about civic/public journalism in the context of professional standards and principles. Although this is an important context, given the history of the profession, it is not a compelling one for this author.[47] To focus the debate on professionalism diminishes the importance of this topic. If the practice of journalism has anything to do with the practice of democracy, the discussion of civic/public journalism must be framed in a community context. It is both an important and urgent discussion. Peter Best, the high school junior, summed up the situation: "Democratic government is based upon responsible citizens. It seems to be failing dismally."[48]

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[45] Rauh interview.

[46] Nysoe interview.

A more compelling analysis may be made within the context of those communities in which civic/public journalism is practiced. The separate but interrelated themes emerging from conversations with West Sound citizen-readers suggest to me several ways to assess the situation. The Sun's diminished editorial voice and increased reader voice on the newspaper's pages plus its participation in community life through the organization of discussions about open space and economic diversity imply a move from a transmission to a ritual function of communication. The Sun does not merely transmit facts on newsprint to far-flung readers to tell them what happened, but it seeks to provide reports about community life to help people understand issues and act on their own behalf. It envisions not individual readers but citizen-readers who participate in community life. It is not merely saying "Here's what happened" but is asking "How can we live together in this place?" This is a stretch of Carey's transmission and ritual modes of communication, but I find it apt.[49]

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[47] Those interested in analyzing this debate from the perspective of professionalism may find Andrew Abbott's provocative essay useful. See Abbott, A. (1988). A system of professions: An essay on the division of expert labor. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

[48] Best interview.

The Sun aims to involve citizen-readers in shaping their lives on the peninsula. This aim echoes the "civic transformation" Christians, et al, envision as a role for the press. They write that "when the mission of news is not simply enlightenment but proactive citizenship, the predominant codes will be social justice, communal bonding and participatory politics.[50]

That West Sound citizen-readers want to exercise power over their lives and institutions resonates with the findings of Neuman, et al, who report their subjects reacted enthusiastically to information about how to take control over public issues.[51] This team of scholars proposed a social constructionist model of political communication that includes an active, interpreting, meaning-constructing audience and interaction between the audience and the media.[52]

The Sun is practicing a variety of journalism that anticipates civic engagement. To be fair, not all citizen-readers appreciated this sort of journalism. The family with whom I lived during the field work phase of his project missed the "old Sun," the newspaper that only reported what happened. The "new Sun" gave them issues to think about, raised questions about community life and offered information to help them formulate an opinion. After a few months of reading the "new Sun," Ric Glomstad told me he was learning about issues he hadn't thought about. "So I'm going to be better informed about things I wouldn't normally choose to go to the paper for. I would not go to the library and try to track down all that information. So I guess I think it's fine."[53]

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[49] Carey. J. W. (1992 reprint). Communication as culture: Essays on media and society. New York, NY: Routledge, Chapman and Hall. (Originally published by Unwin Hyman, Inc. 1989). 15-23.

[50] Christians, C., Ferre, J. P., & Fackler, P. M. (1993). Good news: Social ethics & the press. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. 16.

[51] Neuman, W. R., Just. M. R., & Crigler, A. N. (1992). Common knowledge: News and the construction of political meaning. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press. 17-19.

[52] Neuman (1992). 111.

Greider speculates about a press like The Sun that would start with "what people needed to understand to function as citizens." He writes:

> A responsible newspaper would learn how to teach and listen and agitate. I imagine a newspaper that is both loyal and smart, that approaches daily reality from the perspective of its readers, then uses its new sophistication to examine power in their behalf. A newspaper with those qualities would not begin to solve the democratic problem, but it could begin to rebuild the connective tissue that is missing.[54]

The civic/public journalism debate should be a conversation among many voices. It should certainly include those of people in communities where this variety of journalism is practiced, those of scholars from a wide variety of disciplines and, yes, those of journalists. The discussion should be open to all who have something to say about the role of the press in community life.

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[53] Glomstad, R. (4 May 1993.). Interview with the author, Bremerton, WA.

[54] Greider, W. (1992). Who will tell the people? The betrayal of American democracy. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster Touchstone edition. 304-305.

Appendix A
Interview questions

1. Could you tell me what you do here?

2. How long have you been in this position?

3. How long have you lived in the greater Kitsap area? In which part of Kitsap do you live?

4. At the economic diversification summit, people in our group talked about community or the lack of it. Could you tell me what you consider your community? How would you describe it?

5. What factors are necessary to support this community or to enable it to grow?

6. What factors threaten this community? In what ways?

7. I'd like to shift now to some questions about The Sun. What things does The Sun do that are important to your sense of community? What things—if any— does it do to foster or build community?

8. What are some things that The Sun does that do not foster or build community?

9. What things could The Sun do to foster or build community?

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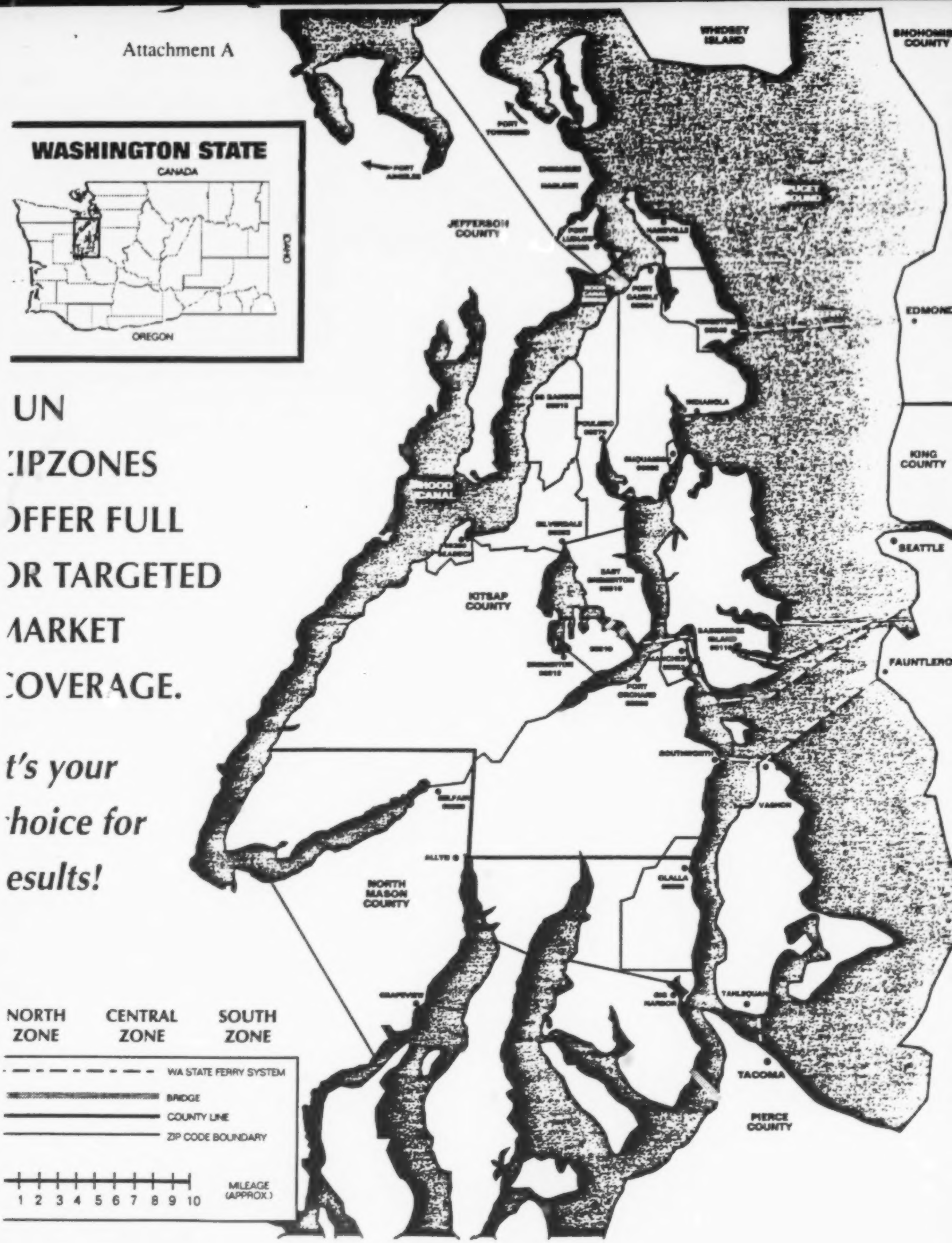
Attachment A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KING COUNTY
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BAINBRIDGE ISLAND
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PORT ORCHARD
FAUNTLERO
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VASHON
BELFAIR
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NORTH MASON COUNTY
OLALLA
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Public Journalism: Leadership or Readership?

A Look at Media Involvement

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Public Journalism: Leadership or Readership?

A Look at Media Involvement

Public Agenda has been called "the hottest secular religion in the news business" (Shepard, 1994, p. 29). It is difficult to pin down exactly what this movement is because it is still defining itself. Accordingly, identifying which projects are examples of the trend and converting traditionalists to its ways can be difficult. What we will end up calling this trend is not certain at this time. The movement has a variety of names ranging from Public Agenda, Public Journalism, Civic Journalism, Public Service Journalism to Community-assisted Reporting.

Simply put, the movement has two goals: one is making news organizations listen more closely to their audiences and, two is having the organizations play more active roles in their communities. "Detachment is out; participation is in. Experts are no longer the quote-machines of choice; readers' voices must be heard" (Shepard, 1994, p. 29).

As the movement grows, its components include "asking readers to help decide what the paper covers and how it covers it; becoming a more active player and less an observer; lobbying for change on the news pages; finding sources whose voices are often unheard; and, above all, dramatically strengthening the bonds between newspaper and community. At its heart is the assumption that a newspaper should act as a catalyst for change. The newspapers are playing a role not unlike that of a community organizer" (Shepard, 1994, p. 30).

The Poynter Institute began its public journalism work in 1975. The first of the Poynter Papers was A Call to Leadership, a document that was "written at a time of trouble for American journalism and the public it serves."

This initial document noted that the "time of trouble" included

> Profits from the news business, while high compared to other industries, are down.
>
> A corporate culture has superseded a journalistic one.
>
> Absentee owners and investors lack a passion for local communities.

> Goals and standards are set by business managers without the understanding or participation of the people who work for them.
>
> Short-term financial interests and burdensome debt threaten the long-term health of the news business.
>
> All around us, the forces of social, technological, and economic change challenge traditional modes of thinking, production, and delivery. Some of the conditions facing news organizations are, no doubt, cyclical and will ameliorate with an upturn in the economy. But others are clearly structural—they will change us forever—and demand new kinds of leadership.
>
> A great irony results from the combination of these forces: Never has the quality of journalism been so high, yet the morale of journalists so low. Reporters are suspicious of the motives of their editors. The editors worry about the values of business managers. Some news organizations are in turmoil, fighting what amounts to a cultural cold war over values and resources.
>
> A failure to act now threatens the news business with obsolescence, or worse, irrelevance. Determined, high-minded, and inspirational leadership is the best hope for our franchise, our profession, and the citizens we serve (Clark, 1992, Preamble).

In 1992, it was the suggestion of Roy Peter Clark to add some guidelines to the overlay of procedures in all newsrooms and editorial rooms for the survival of the media.

First, according to Clark, newspapers must sink roots into their communities. News organizations must accept their ownership and leadership as public trusts and that serve the public interest. This involves taking the long view, investing in the community, and letting local executives create a sense of "family."

Next, Clark encourages news organizations to share financial and strategic information, including profit margins, revenues, and budgets. This creates a "shared vision" and builds trust through full disclosure. This disclosure helps news people and business people to find a common language to understand their shared purposes and reconcile their conflicting values.

"Embracing change" will help an enterprise to thrive in an environment of persistent change. Investment in research and development will take advantage of technologies created by other industries. Clark encourages involving members of groups that the enterprise wants to serve by involving them in decision making. This might entail forming partnerships with special interest media, community news organs, and alternative publications in order to expand the enterprise's influence without diluting precious resources.

Along with these suggestions come the more obvious ones for keeping up with change, innovation, and serve as coping strategies for new futures. It is important to inspire the next generation to set high and consistent standards, and reward risk taking and innovation. There must be the creation of a climate in news rooms where "people read and discuss important ideas, where they develop interests both deep and broad, where they can renew themselves to avoid burnout and dead ends."

Finally, Clark encourages news organizations to "build our common public life." He encourages journalists to never forget the business they are in. News organizations should provide a forum for public discussion "to preserve and enhance democratic society" (Clark, 1992, p. 13).

Beyond all of the suggestions for news organizations and for news enterprises, perhaps Clark's strongest admonition is to "deserve the First Amendment" (p. 13).

After Clark's Poynter Papers: No. 1, came G. Stuart Adam's Poynter Papers: No. 2, Notes Towards a Definition of Journalism: Understanding an old craft as an art form.

> Journalism is made; it doesn't just happen. So the language we use to see it and to teach it must be akin to the language of art. The language of

> art encourages students to enter the imagination of the artist and meditate on how the artist does what he or she does. (p. 46)

According to Adam, a preliminary definition of journalism contains at least four elements: reporting, judging, a public voice, and the "here and now." "The concept of journalism embraces and gives a place to notions of commentary, judgment, and criticism" (1993, p. 13).

> Journalism is also public. We distinguish in our minds between voices that are specialized or private, as in correspondence, and voices conceived for public consumption. Journalism, along with novels, short stories, speeches, and proclamations, is created for public consumption. Thus its voice and vocabulary are colored by didactic responsibilities—by explicitness, by an absence of allusions that have meaning only in the private sphere, and by the absence of a vocabulary that has meaning solely within a specialized discourse such as science (1993, p. 13).

It is with Jay Rosen's Community Connectedness: Passwords for Public Journalism, Poynter Papers: No 3, that the goal of public journalism was stated, "to create journalism that listens to citizens and reinvigorates public life." Rosen says that the agenda behind public journalism or "community connectedness" is that public life should work—it should solve problems, engage citizens, and produce a useful discussion (1993a, p. 9).

In the forward by Roy Peter Clark, a short chronicle of the history of public journalism is created.

> In ancient times, say 1975, something quite predictable would happen if the words "community," "connections," and "journalism" were mentioned in the same sentence: principled journalists would duck for cover.
>
> These committed professionals believed—and some still believe—that connections with community could only result in sacrifice of duty: caving

> in and selling out. A journalism inspired by connections with community could be little more than chamber of commerce puffery, dictated by the business managers of newspapers who power-lunched with bankers at exclusive clubs.
>
> Two decades later, community connectedness has a whole new meaning, a beneficent one. The words have reappeared in the heavens, but forming an intriguing new constellation, with a powerful influence on the lives of journalists and citizens. One of the new stargazers who is reading and interpreting these signs is a young journalism professor, Jay Rosen, a wise man from the east, who is changing the way journalists understand their vocation and its influence on public life.
>
> For Rosen, the newspaper should be an engine of the centripetal forces of community. An yet there are centrifugal forces at work, too, threatening to fragment the society and undermine the democracy. Readers are disappearing, community ties are loosening, civility in public discourse is disappearing, newsrooms are hotbeds of cynicism, and people feel increasingly alienated from the public institutions that once nurtured citizenship (1993a, p. iv, v).

As far as many of its proponents are concerned, the movement had its roots in the reporting of the 1988 presidential campaign. Many believed that the media had been transfixed by negative campaign tactics and were oblivious to issues that mattered to the voters.

Kansas editor Buzz Merritt, and a then Buffalo reporter, Rosen, met in 1991 at a seminar sponsored by the Kettering Foundation. Merritt and Rosen found common ground. Both are now full-time proponents of the trend. Merritt is has written a book on public journalism and Rosen is the director of the nonprofit Project on Public Life and the Press at New York University.

To Rosen,

> The "ought" is essential, for community connectedness has a prominent moral dimension. It prescribed for any community a preferred state of affairs by stressing action over drift, engagement over withdrawal, deliberation and debate over silence and denial. The journalists who are pushing the movement forward have declared an end to their neutrality on these questions. More than any pet project or chosen solution, then, the "agenda" behind community connectedness is simply that public life should work—it should solve problems, engage citizens, and produce a useful discussion. To advance such an agenda implies a rethinking of the journalist's task, and this, ultimately, is what the movement is about—the very different view of responsibility represented by the experiments in community connectedness (1993a, p. 9).

Behind this movement are two powerful foundations and mass media conglomerates—the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation and the Gannett newspapers' Freedom Forum. Although not officially part of the public journalism movement, Gannett newspapers have been going in the same direction under the company's News 2000 program.

Currently, 171 news organizations are working with the Project on Public Life and 95 initiatives are under way, according to Lisa Austin,the project's research director. Each public journalism project is tailored to the local community. (cited in Shepard, 1994, p. 31)

While many consider Rosen and Merritt the "fathers" of the "community connectedness" movement, Rosen cites three professionals with helping develop the movement, and lending legitimacy to it with their call for change to the profession.

James K. Batten, chief executive of Knight-Ridder, Inc., contributed to Rosen's Poynter paper. Noting the importance of the relationship between newspapers and their communities, he cited William Allen White in his definition of community spirit, "emphasizing the importance to newspapers of community spirit—by which he meant `the willingness of people to care about where they live and to wade in to help solve its problems'" (cited in Rosen, 1993a, p. 13).

According to Batten, those "who feel a real sense of connection to the places they live" are more likely to become newspaper readers. (cited in Rosen, 1993a, p. 11) "If communities continue to erode, how can we expect newspapers to continue to prosper, over the long term?" He noted a continued and growing disinterest and disconnectedness of people with their communities and their responsibility in those communities.

While Burl Osborne, editor of the *Dallas Morning News*, was interviewed as the incoming president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors. Osborne noted the "extent to which people are isolated from public life, from the self-governing process, and from the source of our public institutions," and called for newspapers to "encourage people back into the streets" (cited in Rosen, 1993a, p. 5).

A third, and perhaps the most influential of the three professionals identified by Rosen, is David Broder of *The Washington Post*. Broder published a series of columns in 1990, in which he urged his colleagues to take more responsibility for the deteriorating quality of political discourse.

Broder wrote,

> We cannot allow the 1990 election to become another exercise in public disillusionment and political cynicism. It is time for those of us in the world's freest press to become activists, not on behalf of a particular party or politician, but on behalf of the process of self-government. We have to help reconnect politics and government—what happens in the campaign and what happens afterward in public policy—if we are to have accountability and genuine democracy in this country (cited in Rosen, 1993a, p. 5).

According to Rosen, the first and ongoing experiment with this feeling that "it was time to do something about the withdrawal and disengagement of citizens, and the press would have to be the do-er" (1993a, p. 5) took place in 1988 at the *Ledger-Enquirer* in Columbus, Georgia. The paper published a series of articles detailing a host of long-term problems the city had to face. When there was little response to the series, the editors decided to take the experiment a step further. They organized a public meeting where residents could discuss the future of their city and the problems they felt should be faced and wanted to see addressed.

Because of the response to that meeting, a new civic movement was born, United Beyond 2000, that was led by Jack Swift, the editor of the newspaper. The purpose of the group was to get a public dialog working. The group sponsored other public forums. Swift described the goals of his paper's experiment: "We're trying to find every way we can to help citizens empower themselves, get involved in their community, work together on mutual concerns, and make a difference."

The effort allowed the *Ledger-Enquirer* to make the cover of Knight-Ridder's 1989 annual report, and Swift was named the winner of the company's yearly excellence award. This gave the corporate stamp of approval to the newspaper's risky step into community activism.

According to Rosen, the most recent projects since 1990 include *The Sun* in Bremerton, Washington, *The Wichita Eagle*, *The Charlotte Observer*, *The Star-Tribune* in Minneapolis, and *The Portland* (Me.) *Press Herald*. To some, these new initiatives may seem like resuscitated old-fashioned newspaper "crusades."

While several of the projects borrow some of the spirit of an earlier era when activism and journalism weren't seen as opposites, Rosen (1993) says "*what distinguishes community connectedness from simple crusading is the emphasis on public discussion and civic involvement* [italics added]. The experiments put the authority of the newspaper behind a simple but powerful proposition: that politics and public life ought to address the community's deepest concerns, and ought to engage citizens in the process" (p. 9).

Briefly, here are examples of some projects that others used to embrace the idea of citizen empowerment.

The *Ledger-Enquirer*, along with the organization of public meetings, sponsored other public forums and backyard barbecues where residents could trade views and discover common ground. The project of the *Enquirer* caused controversial discussions among professionals who saw the activities as risky. "But the Columbus project can be seen as the first in a wave of newspaper experiments that tried to put the words of Batten, Osborne, and Broder into practice" (Rosen, 1993a, p. 6).

The Sun caused community concern about the preservation of open spaces from encroaching development after an editorial about plans by developers. Because of the response, the paper gathered 150 community leaders into a steering committee that conducted public forums about open space preservation. As a result of the forums, citizens nominated parcels of land to be designated "open space" and gathered signatures to put a bond issue on the ballot to purchase the space.

Buzz Merritt, editor of Knight-Ridder's *Wichita Eagle*, was concerned about the media's preoccupation with charges and countercharges and poll results in political coverage. A week after the 1988 election, Merritt wrote a column. Because the politicians wouldn't change, he asked for an alliance among the voters, the politicians and the journalists. Positive change was his goal.

One of the first identified projects of the movement was Merritt's The Voter Project, which was carried out with the help of the local ABC television affiliate. The project involved surveys and focus group of readers and culminated in six Sunday in-depth articles leading up to the 1990 elections.

The next explorations into community connectedness took place at *The Wichita Eagle*. A project by *The Wichita Eagle* was called "The People Project." It "undertook a cooperative campaign to encourage residents to rethink their own approach to the city's most serious problems: education, crime, political gridlock, and stresses on the family" (Rosen, 1993a, p. 7). The paper involved readers and leading political candidates. Other citizens were invited to telephone, fax or write about what they thought were problems facing the community and ways to fix them.

The paper took an activist style with its coverage of elections aimed at improving voter participation and strengthening political debate. A list of ten key issues important in the statewide election was used as a focus of continuing coverage. The paper announced its intention of engaging readers and endeavoring to force leading candidates to respond.

The project included a local television station and radio station, and consisted of three community-wide "opportunity fairs," which functioned as forums for people with common interests to contact, to exchange ideas and to begin work on solutions.

Another project, The Charlotte Project: Helping citizens take back democracy became the title and topic of a fourth Poynter Paper. In 1992, *The Charlotte Observer*, the Poynter Institute for Media Studies, and WSOC-TV,

> pledged to give up the "horse race" approach to the 1992 campaign and to focus their reporting on what residents said mattered to them. A "voters' agenda" was created out of interviews with readers. Follow-up surveys and meetings with citizens were planned to help the *Observer* keep its focus on the public's concerns, rather than machinations of campaign insiders. The *Observer's* approach won wide notice among campaign reporters and editors for being more in tune with the serious mood of voters in the 1992 election. (Rosen, 1993a, p. 8).

A study of the fourth Poynter Paper reveals a thoughtful and objective look at the project. The report covers how the project began and about what became of the initial objectives of the project, and it speaks to and gives examples of the "new" approach to coverage of the election issues and how the reporters and editors covered the candidates. The project was evaluated, and thoughtful comments were made about what changed and what was learned by the participants in the project. The "what we learned" portion of the report includes a section on "what next?" and a suggestion of what organizational obstacles might be encountered by others (Miller, 1994).

In Minneapolis, over 130 "neighborhood roundtables" were conducted by *The Star-Tribune.* Again, the purpose was getting the readers, leaders, and concerned citizens together to discuss and focus on questions of public concern. Topics ranged from health care and race relations to the economy. Because of the response, (an estimated 1,500 residents responded to the call), there were 1.5 new editorial staff positions created. These staff were charged with the responsibility to design and implement projects that would "enable our readers to reconnect with their newspaper, their political system, their communities, and each other."

Another example noted by Rosen was *The Portland* (Me.) *Press Herald* experience. The whole initiative was begun with one reporter's assignment to thoroughly cover and research the problems with Maine's worker's compensation system. The four-part series drew so much attention and public response that the paper assembled the leading players in the system. These leaders were charged with the responsibility of dealing fairly and competently with the issue and coming up with solutions to the huge, disastrous mess that was the system.

According to Presstime, two other newspapers took up the challenge in 1993. The managing editor of the *Marietta Times*, Robert C. Gabordi, invited readers of the newspaper to call him with their views. This forum was been expanded into a radio call-in show. At one reader's suggestion, the paper ran a free 12-page, ad-free tabloid called "Stop the Hurting." It was written by readers, community leaders, experts and victims and was aimed to stop the epidemic of domestic violence. As a follow-up, the paper sponsored a public forum on the topic. An outgrowth of the meeting was the formation of a "survivor's bank" that loans money on a short-term basis to victims of violent predicaments.

In January, the *Detroit Free Press* announced a "Children First" campaign. Jane Daugherty was named the project director, and was assigned four reporters to help her staff the project. The publisher of the *Free Press* transferred $14,000 that had originally been allocated for executive office renovations to the project fund. In May, the *Free Press* sponsored a day-long conference on preventing violence against children. "I don't think we'll ever cover children's issues the same again. We tend to ask now, 'How can this be fixed?' I don't think we asked that before. We would write these moving scenarios and leave them hanging in midair" said Albers (1993, p. 33).

The brutal killing of a child by a sniper as he was on his way to school resulted in only a small story in the Chicago *Sun-Times*. The editor, Dennis A. Britton, thought there would be a commotion from the public. There wasn't. Britton was moved to make an unusual front-page plea: Please don't let this be someone else's problem. It's yours. It's mine. Let's together retake our city" (Albers, 1993, p. 32).

At the same time, the editor of the Chicago *Tribune*, Jack Fuller, made a similar appeal: "not let the murder of a single child in our metropolitan area go unnoticed." Except for about 100 letters, the response to the editors' entreaties has been minimal.

The public journalism movement is also evident in Tallahassee. Beginning with a poll taken by the Harwood Group, a national public-issues research firm, citizens of Tallahassee reported their concerns about life in the community and what issues they felt needed change. The survey was the first activity of the Tallahassee public journalism project called Public Agenda. It is a project "designed to strengthen community connections by fostering grass-roots dialogue about common problems and solutions" (Democrat, 1994, 2F).

The sponsors of the project, the *Tallahassee Democrat*, WCTV, Florida State University and Florida A&M University, are financed by the Pew Charitable Trusts. The project was introduced by the *Democrat* in November 1994. The *Democrat* regularly runs articles on the Public Agenda project. The series highlights the results of a community survey conducted by Kerr & Downs, a Tallahassee Research firm.

Initially, a newspaper editorial invited Tallahasseeans to become involved in their community ... involved in making positive changes. The editorial stressed that Tallahasseeans "as a group" are "disengaged" and they "take democracy for granted" and are "apathetic, alienated, angry." The *Democrat* editorial proposes that a citizen "can take part by just showing up."

One *Democrat* article recommended Daniel Yankelovich's Coming to Public Judgment: Making democracy work in a complex world as suggested reading for those interested in the arena of Public Journalism. Yankelovich, who was educated at Harvard University and the Sorbonne, has pioneered many research techniques that have become standard in the field of assessing the impact of social values on public policy and consumer behavior. He is the co-founder of The Public Agenda Foundation.

Yankelovich says the media are among America's most dynamic institutions. Yet he says, they are difficult to work with. "They are always busy. Producing TV news or a daily newspaper in today's world is an extraordinarily complex task. In addition, the media are dominated by a powerful subculture that repels outsiders and powerfully conditions insiders to its rules and values." But

> In recent years, the media have grown increasingly conscious of their vast influence; they take pride in it, but do not know what to do with it. They are more comfortable when criticizing others than when being criticized, and they tend to be thin-skinned, prickly, and defensive.
>
> Despite these oddities, it is worthwhile—indeed, indispensable—to find a way to work with them, for they hold the key to strengthening the public. To advance public judgement, it will be necessary to support those in the media who see the standard for measuring journalism to be its effect on the quality of public deliberation. Consciousness raising and presenting expert fact do not by themselves do the job the communications

> media should be doing. Media that tell the public everything about an issue except what its choices are have not done their job. (1991, p. 250)

According to Yankelovich, his work with the media has convinced him that "the media [are] willing to acknowledge that expert debate can be taken only so far in a democracy like ours." The Public Agenda group indicates that the media have "found a belief that a more constructive and thoughtful forum of public opinion is desirable and can be achieved" (p. 251).

Yankelovich's first work with the Public Agenda organization, with the support of the Markle Foundation and the media, was in 1982 with a "first choice" campaign in Des Moines, Iowa. It was called *HealthVote 82*. The campaign was aimed at helping citizens understand the issue of rising health care costs and to think through alternative means for addressing it. The project had several distinctive aspects.

> It was visibly supported by leadership groups holding opposing points of view.
>
> It specifically attempted to move the public beyond mass opinion by addressing important misperceptions identified in preliminary research. It invited the public to consider a range of choices with the pros *and* the cons clearly spelled out.
>
> It featured intensive and *repetitive* presentations of public choices on television, radio, in the daily newspaper, and in more than two hundred community meetings organized by the project.
>
> It culminated with a HealthVote "ballot" distributed through the *Des Moines Register* that reiterated the pros and cons of the choices and emphasized leadership's desire to know the public's considered views. (p. 252)

The copyright date of Yankelovich's book is 1991, so it is interesting that he cites this project as "the first public choice campaign." No reference is made to the aforementioned public journalism projects. He indicates that Public Agenda has worked with more than 35 television stations and 20 daily newspapers in more than 20 communities to conduct public choice campaigns. In his *Notes*, the television stations include network affiliates in Baltimore, Denver, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Philadelphia, Raleigh, and Seattle. The newspapers included the *Des Moines Register*, *Kansas City Star*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the *Nashville Tennessean*, and the *Wilmington News Journal*.

> Public choice campaigns demand a serious commitment from broadcasters and newspapers. TV stations are asked to broadcast spots and documentaries intensively for a period of six to ten weeks. They are asked to devote their own public affairs program to the issue at hand and to cover the issue in the newscasts. They are asked to promote community meetings and the distribution and results of the balloting. The Public Agenda has deliberately sought the participation of commercial broadcaster—rather than public television and radio—and has been successful in enlisting them.
>
> What is asked of newspapers may well be unprecedented. In addition to devoting news, editorial, and promotional resources to the issue, newspapers are asked to print and distribute a special supplement featuring a choice "ballot" as a public service without charge.
>
> The participation of TV stations and newspapers in public choice campaigns has several advantages. Their reach is almost universal. Most people turn to news on television and in newspapers to learn about important policy questions. And, media are generally perceived to be balanced and disinterested in their coverage of issues.
>
> Moreover, growing numbers of media professionals are showing an unexpected receptivity to the concept of ["]working through["]. This

> group sees the public choice campaign as a reasonable extension of their current work. They are already covering the key issues. The aim is to present different points of view so that citizens understand them and can grapple with them seriously. For the more thoughtful media professional who acknowledges the complexity of the issues the country faces and who take pride in promoting honest debate, there is considerable discomfort with "business as usual." The Public Agenda's stress on the need to go beyond consciousness raising strikes a responsive chord. (p. 252, 253)

To Yankelovich, there are three stages for advancing the three-stage public judgment process. One is consciousness raising, the second is "working through," and the third is resolution. Yankelovich uses the term "choicework" to refer to a variety of techniques for helping the public expedite working through. David Mathews, president of the Kettering Foundation, coined the term "choicework."

> Several forms of work are involved in choicework. One is the work of transposing choices from the expert's to the public's framework. Another is the work of overcoming obstacles, and a third is the work involved in making the choices. Each of the various forms of choicework engage different participants (p. 246).

In conclusion, Yankelovich notes that

> To preserve America's preeminence in democracy, there is something for everyone to do—average citizens, the institutions that conduct public forums, people in positions of leadership, experts, government officials, the media—all of us. That is the way things get done in a democracy (p. 255).

While there is little written criticism of this new movement of Public Journalism, maybe because it is so new and has not been embraced by the majority of the professions that are involved, one thoughtful article raised the concerns of journalists in the field. Should journalists be just "quote machines of choice?" "My problem is that we're running around saying 'Eureka, we've found it.'" says Eugene L. Roberts, Jr., managing editor of the *New York Times*. "I'm not sure we ever lost it (cited in Shepard, 1994, p. 30).

In a Letter to the Editor that was in response to Shepard's article in the American Journalism Review, Berl Schwartz, general manager of the *State News* in East Lansing, Michigan, said

> So-called public journalism is an old concept with a new name, but its return after several decades of elitism is certainly welcome.
>
> Once upon a time newspapers knew what was going on in their communities because their newsroom makeup represented virtually all strata of society (if not all colors or ethnic groups). Remember when larger newspapers had labor reporters? They went the way of hot type about the same time reporters became interchangeable with lawyers in dress and compassion.
>
> Why is public journalism emerging now? Because the '60s generation—activists who turned to journalism as an outlet for their idealism—have come of age (p. 7, 8).

Another response to the article came from Tom Field, editor of the *Deming Headlight* in Deming, New Mexico. He declared:

> Re: "public journalism," Come on, this is supposed to be our job description! Let's not treat it like a revolution.
>
> The real story is to turn the spotlight not on those who practice "public journalism," but those who don't.

> Remember, no matter the size of the city or the staff, we all work for community newspapers, and if we don't put community first, then there will be no newspapers (1994, p. 7,8).

Leonard Downie, Jr., executive editor of the *Washington Post*, reported "No matter how strongly I feel about something that's going on out there, my job is not to try to influence the outcome. I just don't want to cross that line, no matter how well-meaning the reasoning might be for crossing it." Downie thinks there are two factors that have contributed to the public journalism's growth: a desire to boost circulation and to win popularity for editors uncomfortable with criticism. "It appears that you are doing something good and then people will love you for it. I'm just not going to worry about being loved or not" (cited in Shepard, 1994, p. 30).

Downie doesn't vote, he says he seldom reads the editorial pages and indicates that he tries not to form opinions on issues the *Post* covers. He says his job is to "do nothing except tell readers what is happening" (cited in Shepard, 1994, p. 33).

Yet Chicago *Sun-Times* editor, Dennis A. Britton, says, "I come from a journalism tradition that shies away from advocacy. But we're a gritty city newspaper that should make a difference in people's lives. If we don't call the community to action, then we aren't good citizens" (cited in Albers, 1993, p. 32).

Jane Daugherty at the *Detroit Free Press*, has taken the activist role to heart. She is concerned about the misgivings `old-school' journalists might have. How does this type of advocacy go over with others in her profession? She had a chance to find out when she spoke about "Children First" before the national convention of Investigative Reporters and Editors in New York City. "I thought, `These are the cynics who are going to be really critical of stepping wildly over the line, but they were wildly enthusiastic. No one raised the first question. All they wanted to know was how to do it'" (cited in Albers, 1993, p. 33).

The issue seems to be one of how close a newspaper should get to its own stories. As editors consider the implications of attempting to become a part of the solution rather than just a community chronicler, the issue becomes critical, "For some, however, the resulting programs and the likely boost to a newspaper's image are rewards worth the gamble." The line between journalism and activism has become blurred.

In a November 1994 column, Broder of *The Washington Post,* whom Rosen credits with being one of the initiators of the interest in the public journalism movement, notes there are three new initiatives that promote activism of the citizenry. Broder calls these initiatives "citizenship movement[s]." They recognize a need for eliminating intrusive, top-heavy government in Washington. This, he surmises, demands a more engaged citizenry.

Several private organizations are striving to encourage and bolster that kind of activism. One of the most important efforts, according to Broder is being started by the National Civic League, an old, established organization. It is working with John Gardner, who is the founder of both the Urban Coalition and Common Cause, and who used to be a member of the Cabinet. The name of their alliance is the Alliance for National Renewal. It joins the forces of 100 organizations that endeavor to cultivate local leadership. According to Gardner, the Alliance will give "attention to local innovators ... and to spread the good news about the successes of their projects" (Broder, 1994, p. 12) in order to encourage others to similar challenges.

A second enterprise is funded by the Bradley Foundation in Milwaukee. It is called The New Citizenship Project. John P. Waters, president, says, "We want to use a lot of the experimentation going on at the state and local level to talk about what opportunities there are to do things better by having them locally, not nationally directed" (p. 12).

The third organizational project cited by Broder involves the American Civic Forum. It plans to issue a "call for a new citizenship" in the same vein as the other two groups. This is a non-partisan effort led by Harry C. Boyte of the University of Minnesota. Reportedly, a White House domestic policy aide, William Galston, is working with the group. "Instead of mainly providing services and making top-down decisions, it should act as a catalyst ... and provide tools for citizens and communities to solve their own problems" (cited in Broder, 1994, p. 12).

As far as Broder is concerned, the cynicism within the citizenry that she sees calls for renewed grass roots involvement, an active citizenry knowledgeable about how democracy is supposed to work, and a serious look at the issues facing all communities and the country. (p. 12)

In listing the names and phone numbers of the organizations he cites, Broder is, in essence, putting out a call to arms. He encourages those who are interested to become involved. His parting works are: "Remember. The battle to replace cynicism with citizenship really does begin at home" (p. 12). Although Broder titles these initiatives a "citizenship movement," they have many of the trappings of the public journalism or public agenda movement that are taking place in the media.

Are the activities of *The Star* in Bremerton, Washington, *The Wichita Eagle*, *The Star-Tribune* in Minneapolis, and the *Detroit Free Press* the forerunners of a movement that has had a number of starting points? Are many of these enterprises, while operating under different titles, such as Public Journalism or Public Agenda, working toward a common goal? Are the media enterprises and the cooperative efforts between media driving toward similar accomplishments?

Will it be the responsibility of the foundations and organizations or the public obligation of the press to lead the cause? Is there a prophetic coincidence that the press and a variety of corporations and organizations have begun to move in a similar direction? What will the role of the mainstream journalist be?

> The skirmishing has begun and it is certain to bring into play internal conflicts within the press between what we see as our own moral imperatives and the ethical imperatives that demand fairness and disinterested professionalism in the presentation of the news. It will be an interesting test of our character. (Broder, 1994, p. 14)

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A Critical Review:
Re-conceptualizing the relation of 'democracy' to 'news'

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Paper for presentation to the Civic Journalism Interest Group

Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication

August 1995.

Acknowledgements: This paper is based on a section of the author's doctoral dissertation, prepared under the direction of Jane Delano Brown, professor, School of Journalism & Mass Communication, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Thanks also to Professors Craig Calhoun, Dorothy Holland, Philip Meyer and Donald Shaw, all of UNC-Chapel Hill, for advice and assistance.

ABSTRACT

A critical review: Reconceptualizing the relation of 'democracy' to 'news'

Journalists inventing "civic" or "public" journalism are forcing their profession to confront a question basic to its economic survival: What are news media good for in a democracy? The nexus of democratic theory and journalistic practice hides a problematic debt to a liberal democratic focus on individual rights, not communal concerns, thus constricting practitioners' idea of "news." The discourse ethics of Jurgen Habermas can help public journalists to create a more participatory democracy.

WORD COUNT: 73
FOR: Civic Journalism Interest Group

A critical review:
Re-conceptualizing the relation of ‘democracy’ to ‘news’

> *Traditional journalists, are risk averse. They have to learn to take some risks. And with the state of journalism today, particularly newspapers and television, there's damn little to risk, basically, in terms of credibility or anything else.*
>
> -- Davis Merritt, editor, *The Wichita Eagle*

Increasing numbers of American journalists are advocating a change in the stance that news workers take toward the people who are the audience for news. These journalists think of themselves as inventing “civic” or “public” journalism. On one level, such journalists are forcing their profession to confront a question basic to its economic survival into the 21st century: What are news media good for, anyway? On another level, these public journalists are recognizing their profession's origins during the European Enlightenment. This paper explores the connections between 17th, 18th and 19th century development of the idea of a “liberal” democracy and the concept of the “public sphere” to the nascent 1990s concept of “public journalism.” For, in a real sense, public journalism is more than what some detractors label it: the “flavor of the month” -- a desperate grasping for connection to consumers by editors whose newspapers face escalating costs and declining penetration levels. Public journalism's rhetorical roots are sunk deeply into 300 years of Western intellectual history. That Enlightenment legacy can be called upon consciously by designers of a public-journalism approach to late 20th century problems of public life.

A more reflexive journalism

Such an intellectualy grounded approach would correct a tendency among both journalism educators and working journalists to *assume*, rather than to examine critically, journalism's underlying purpose. Journalists, *everyone* knows, scrutinize societal institutions, particularly performance of elected and appointed officials, on behalf of all citizens and then publish objective information about officials and policies so that voters can judge officials' conduct of public affairs (Graber, 1989b, p. 23). This function is implied in the First Amendment guarantee of press freedom, which allows Americans -- journalists and ordinary citizens -- to *assume* that journalism and democracy are bedfellows (Altschull, 1990; Deetz, 1994; Keefer, 1993; Lasswell, 1948). Where did this idea originate? And why should it be so?

There's a difficult, perhaps even dangerous, taken-for-granted quality to the American press-politics connection. Americans assume that journalism is indispensable to the political process we call "democracy." By democracy, I mean self-government by active citizens rather than the thin concept of representative government that Americans accepted as modern democracy until we noticed sometime in the 1980s that government was not running very well when we left decisions solely to our representatives (Barber, 1984; Boyte, 1989). Neither journalists nor communication educators spend sufficient time musing about the profession's debt to liberal democratic philosophy. That rarely examined nexus of practice and theory was what editor Davis Merritt (1990) stepped into when he announced in a September 1990 column that reporters at his Wichita, Kansas, newspaper would cover elections differently. Merritt's column was an early salvo in a battle to create public journalism which, for Merritt, began with concern about declining U.S. voter turnout (interview, August 20, 1992).

Identifying conflicting norms

The relationship between journalism and citizens' disconnection with the political process in American public life (Dionne, 1991; Greider 1992; Yankelovich, 1991) is clear if we consider two unreconciled norms about journalism's task (Graber, 1989b, pp. 24-25):

1) Libertarian theory/ "marketplace of ideas" concept : The mass media provide information and entertainment. Anything interesting or important can become news. The media's job is to report what public officials say and to publish information from official documents, but not to question the truth, accuracy or merits of official information because the news audience can decide which information it believes and which it doubts.

2) Social-responsibility theory: News and entertainment provided by mass media should reflect social standards or norms. Reporters are guardians of the public welfare and should foster political action when needed by publicizing wrong-doing or "social evils." Undesirable viewpoints and questionable accusations should NOT be published.

The Weaver-Wilhoit data

These are utopian ideals, frequently presented without any sense of their historical origins. In real-life practice, journalists come down somewhere in between Graber's two philosophical extremes[1] . One way to glimpse this phenomenon is to consider data from a recent survey of newspaper journalists: The profession's respected tradition of investigative reporting, for example, fits into the social-responsibility camp, especially as it was practiced by the muckrakers active early in the 20th century, but also as researchers (Glasser & Ettema, 1991) describe the practice in the 1990s: So it's not surprising that nearly 70 percent of a nationwide sample of newspaper journalists surveyed in 1992 thought investigating government claims was an "extremely important" journalistic pursuit (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1993, pp. 9-11). Almost the same percentage, however, thought that getting information to the public quickly was "extremely important," a finding consistent with the libertarian neutral-transmission role. Journalists' comfort with that neutral role was buttressed by other findings: only about 26 percent of newspaper journalists thought they should be explicit adversaries of government; even fewer, 16.9 percent, thought news media should be explicit adversaries of business. Many journalists like the libertarian role, for they are far from unanimous on when and where they responsibly can break the profession's neutrality norm. Asked whether they should analyze society's complex problems, Weaver's and Wilhoit's 1992 newspaper respondents split almost exactly 50-50 into separate "yes" and "no" camps.

These survey data suggest that an insufficiently articulated, poorly synthesized rationale underpins many journalists' and journalism educators' assumptions about their profession's role in a democracy. Journalists need a more openly codified understanding of what journalism is, and might become, if its practitioners elected to be more useful to citizens of our American democracy. Public-journalism's adherents -- including Wichita editor Davis Merritt, a highly visible, often quoted spokesman for public journalism -- seek, but don't yet find, acceptance among traditional journalists. To understand the points of conflict between traditional journalism and public journalism, we must explore journalism's history, reviewing the evolution of what many journalists take for granted.

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[1] Graber's typology, however, is not the only possible typology of "normative" theories of the press. For another example, see McQuail (1989), pages 109-134.

A critical-theory perspective facilitates such a review. The critical perspective, as explicated by one social theorist (Bernstein, 1992, p. 4), requires "opening of oneself to the full power of what the 'other' is saying. Such an opening does not entail agreement but rather the to-and-fro play of dialogue. Otherwise dialogue degenerates into a self-deceptive monologue where one never risks testing one's prejudgments." Both communication educators and journalist-practitioners can become aware of what we are doing and consider why we are doing it (Pollock & Cox, 1991). Such an undertaking often is sneered at by working journalists. They don't see practical value in abstract verbiage of theoretical critiques.

Examine implicit values

Yet a theory of journalism -- a theory of news -- is simply knowledge, systematically organized as a set of assumptions, accepted principles and rules that can be applied in a variety of circumstances (McQuail, 1989, pp.4-5). A critical and normative theory of news calls attention to values embedded in journalists' current discursive practices -- including their news stories, their talk and their practice of finding and writing stories -- and then compares journalists' practice to theories of democracy. Particular values underlie any choice. The unexamined choice is still a choice. This discussion of democratic theory attempts to make journalists' choices explicit, to relate those choices to democratic theory, and to call attention to theoretical concepts that better support journalists' commonsense notions of their role in a democracy. Hence, the ideals that journalists take for granted will be scrutinized.

Journalism's Enlightenment origins

One group of media ethicists (Christians, Rotzoll & Fackler, 1991, pp. 412-413), has written, "The media serve a broad purpose in democratic life. As our technological society becomes increasingly complex, we expect the press to inform us fully on all issues." Yet, at the level of media content, what does that mean? How would the content of a particular newspaper or news broadcast be changed if journalists made their practice congruent with a particular stream within liberal democratic theory as handed down from the Enlightenment era, and modified by 20th century political theorists? Almost a decade ago, Peters (1986, p. 3) wrote that, "Mass communication theory and research is one voice in a conversation about the meaning of American democracy and the nature of public life. But it has rarely explicitly recognized its participation in that conversation." When Peters' criticism was written, very little mass-communication literature did recognize its participation in a conversation about public life, with at least one prominent exception -- James Carey (1974). In the 1990s, that dearth is being corrected (Altschull, 1990; Christians, Ferre & Fackler, 1993; Peters & Cmiel, 1991). These sources, and other scholarship in anthropology, cultural studies, political science, and sociology clarify development of theories of news media's role in a democracy.

Individualism vs. community

Journalism has clear ties to Western civilization's Enlightenment tradition -- and that tradition's unfortunate celebration of individual rights to the exclusion of communal concerns (Coleman, 1990). A philosophical inheritance of attention to individual rights, to what *separates* citizens, may have blinded journalists to citizens' common concerns. Thus, even in America's fragmented 1990s society, journalists clinging to 1890s conventions bring to news audiences' attention all the conflict and controversy to be found, but relegate community-building and consensus, if chronicled at all, to inside pages where dull stuff gets lost. In the 1990s, Americans might find useful a press that also helps alienated citizens to find community and common cause (Rosen, 1991). The trouble starts with liberal democratic theory.

One devastating book-length critique of the theory that drives advocates of liberal democracy included this succinct description:

> .. [L]iberal democracy may not be a theory of political community at all. It does not so much provide a justification for politics as it offers a politics that justifies individual rights. It is concerned more to promote individual liberty than to secure public justice, to advance interests rather than to discover goods, and to keep men safely apart rather than to bring them fruitfully together. As a consequence, it is capable of fiercely resisting every assault on the individual -- his privacy, his property, his interests, and his rights -- but it is far less effective in resisting assaults on community or justice or citizenship or participation. (Barber, 1984, p. 4)

Such ideals are classical liberalism's heritage. Not every liberal thinker over the more than three centuries of development of liberal democratic ideals would embrace every detail of Barber's description -- for different varieties of liberalism developed depending on whether the philosopher was discussing government reform in Germany, France, England or the United States (Voegelin 1974). But liberalism's overarching ideal is tolerance. So it is not surprising that sociologists have found among journalists' values a commitment to and admiration of rugged individualism (Gans, 1979; Tuchman, 1978). Enlightenment philosophers such as John Locke formulated liberal democracy as a notion of individual preeminence, as an antidote to the absolutist state's devaluing of ordinary citizens. The rights talk ran parallel to a second influence: development of the scientific method and its norms of neutrality and objectivity.

At the time that ideals of individual rights and scientific thinking were nascent, thinkers were formulating a case against censorship, which had shackled public discussion in the absolute monarchies that then dominated Western Europe. A 20th century American communication theorist, James Carey, recognized the links between Enlightenment thought and the developing practice of journalism. As Carey (1974, p. 228) explained:

Capitalism vs Free Speech?

> Journalism as a distinguishable human activity is only about three hundred years old. It came about when a particular class of people, largely in England and portions of Western Europe, developed a particular hunger for experience: a desire to dispense with the traditional, epic, and heroic and to know about that which is common, useful, unique, original, novel, individual, new--news.... Behind this appetite were two motives: a desire to possess the kind of knowledge--news--that would support the growth of a commercial society and, perhaps less urgently, a desire to expand, through knowledge, the boundaries of political freedom.

As we create public journalism in the 1990s, we must reconsider this connection between free speech and capitalism: A key question is, Who gets to speak in public? Nearly 300 years have passed since philosophers chafing under stringent censorship codes adequately demonstrated that self-regulating markets were powerful examples of citizens' ability to organize themselves without need for an authoritarian monarch -- once justified as a guide for his or her "children/subjects." Those who belonged to the 18th century's new middle class -- the new capitalist class -- created wealth and personal independence by forming and operating new industries being made possible by just-invented technology. Their capitalist zeal birthed a powerful new middle stratum of society between the aristocracy and commoners, provided factory work that brought rural peasants into growing urban centers, and most importantly,

> gave birth to four characteristic modes of expression: the essay, the novel, journalism and the scientific report. While science and scientists were somewhat protected by an essentially medieval tradition of academic freedom, the novelists, the essayists, and journalists had to struggle to secure a right of expression that was not in any way secured by tradition or common law. (Carey, 1974, p. 228)

This was the milieu in which John Milton invented the notion of a "marketplace of ideas" within which truth and falsehood were to grapple, with truth somehow emerging victorious; this also was the period in which John Stuart Mill held that suppression of any opinion, however wrongheaded, harms a society's search for truth; and it was the era when an optimistic John Locke declared all citizens to be free and equal and capable of resolving any dispute by reasoning with others, thus inventing the idea of majority rule (Altschull, 1990, pp. 33-54). The idea of news media as a "marketplace of ideas" descends directly from these Enlightenment philosophies. Three important societal transformations occurred in the 18th century: Previously unenfranchised citizens sought to govern themselves, to control their lives; the nature of work changed, with greater economic wealth possible for more people; and finally, literacy was extended to many more citizens (Carey, 1974; Thompson, 1990).

Today, democrats might reasonably conclude that our greatest problem is not defending individual rights, but finding a way for each American to communicate with the other 260 million of us. In Locke's day, the sovereign individual was to be allowed to find truth and knowledge for himself or herself by "turning to experience...; ...by looking at the evidence for oneself...[and] rendering through language...one's observations of...nature" (Carey, 1974, p. 229). This sovereign individual, it was thought, required only three things: clear and rigorous procedures for observation, language to describe observations with little emotion, and a forum in which to present observations and receive criticism to correct one's thinking. However, as Habermas (1962/1989, 1989) and Thompson (1990) point out, large-scale organizations dominate late 20th century life; individual citizens cannot adequately observe and find truth unassisted. We depend on large-scale institutions -- especially the mass media, particularly the mass media's news-gathering function -- to alert us when our institutions are malfunctioning.

A related issue arose during the Enlightenment: Scientific standards became Western civilization's ideal for finding "truth" and journalism's foundational model. But communication problems lay in wait, because such a model assumes its practitioners have some special knowledge, which many citizens do not possess. But most importantly, the idea of objectivity fails to appreciate human beings' intersubjective, language-based creation of meaning: Humans are fundamentally social and interacting creatures (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969). Outside the physical sciences -- where specially trained solo observers sometimes do discover a new comet or a new bacterium -- human beings create understandings, our truths, using language. We create these meanings from our interactions with other human beings and our interpretations of the meaning of those interactions; we decide what is "true" and "real" based on our social experiences and our interpretations of others' behavior (Thompson, 1990). Others, who come to the same social encounter with different experiences, may interpret that situation differently. Surely, we must pursue the ideal of objectivity in interpreting others' language, but we also need an additional standard for human interaction and interpretation.

Civil society and public sphere

Precisely because of our language-based, intersubjective creation of meaning and truth, the Enlightenment notion of the "public sphere" was an important aspect of ideas about how citizens function in a democracy (Bagdikian, 1992; Habermas, 1989; Thompson, 1990). The public sphere is important *because* it is a venue where people "talk" -- that is, interact through language to create truth. The public sphere emerged as early newspapers of Enlightenment Europe and America circulated among the new capitalist class. The ideas and events described in newspapers were discussed in salons, coffee houses and eating clubs of France, England, Germany, and later, the United States (Habermas, 1989; Thompson, 1990, p. 119). Among members of a restricted class -- because most citizens were not literate -- journalists contributed to the birth of a public conversation about the state. Thomas McCarthy (Habermas, 1962/1989, p. xi) described the ideal public sphere as

> a sphere between civil society and the state in which critical public discussion of matters of general interest was institutionally guaranteed, the liberal public sphere took shape in the specific historical circumstances of a developing market economy. In its clash with the arcane and bureaucratic practices of the absolutist state, the emergent bourgeoisie gradually replaced a public sphere in which the ruler's power was merely represented *before* the people with a sphere in which state authority was publicly monitored through informed and critical discourse *by* the people.

According to Habermas (1962/1989, p. 83), public discussion was the means through which citizens of a democracy achieved "consensus about what was practically necessary in the interest of all." During the Enlightenment, the public sphere was the actual location of a rational -- if restricted and fleeting -- discussion about public life. Habermas's description of one Enlightenment sphere of public conversation need not be worshipped as some Golden Era. He did not research the public sphere among commoners. And participation in the formal middle-class public sphere that Habermas did recognize generally was limited to propertied white males -- and thus reproduced patterns of exclusion by gender, race and ethnicity, and class that continue into late 20th century society, and call into question whether a full public sphere ever can become reality (Fraser, 1992). Carey (1974, p. 231) and Habermas (1962/1989, p. 14) correctly point out, however, that this public sphere was an improvement over tradition in which only the nobility were regarded as citizens. However, Habermas argues that over the past three centuries, the successive enfranchisement of different groups as "citizens" has meant that a greater range of perspectives involved in the conversation has caused problems of understanding[2]. This problem is the key issue in the late 20th century United States, where millions of citizens are separated by hundreds, even thousands, of miles.

The class- and gender-based exclusions of Habermas's Enlightenment public sphere belied any claim that it was a true embodiment of egalitarian democratic ideas or that it achieved Habermas's (1989, 1993a, 1993b) ideal -- that only the better argument, rather than the interactant's status or access to physical/legal force or to economic capital, should prevail in public life. Moreover, achieving even something like that flawed Enlightenment public sphere is more an ideal than a reality today. Society operates on a much larger scale, and citizens compartmentalize their two-tiered experience of social relationships -- (1) direct face-to-face encounters with family, friends or co-workers, and (2) indirect relationships with representatives of governments and corporations, including the mass media of comunication where most citizens learn about public life (Calhoun 1991; Thompson, 1990).

Today's traditional journalists show little concern for where discussion among citizens might take place in 20th century society; they see their mission as providing facts, information, that citizens can use however they wish -- true to the libertarian interpretation of journalists' role. But democratic theorists of a more humanistic bent scoff at the sterility and inadequacy of such an outlook (for example, Dewey, 1927; Calhoun, 1988 & 1991). These latter theorists' intellectual heritage goes back to the French *philosophe* Montesquieu and includes an appreciation of the role of morality in democratic life. They dispute such a *laizzez faire* approach; for them, a *conversation* about collective affairs is more important than any specific *facts* or bits of *information*. Public journalism follows this Montesquieu-Dewey line when it seeks to give voice to citizen concerns, and conceives of newspapers and news broadcasts as possible physical/institutional embodiments of the public sphere. Mass media then become a location for *citizens'* public discussion of political affairs in large-scale democracies. Such an outlook contrasts with traditional journalists' view of conversation as merely "opinion" to be relegated to the editorial page or to broadcast talk shows.

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[2] What neither Carey nor Habermas adequately addresses, and what remains a crucial problem in late 20th century American society, is the failure of supposedly egalitarian liberal democratic theory, and political leaders in the globe's prototypical democracy, to fully grapple with the denial of full citizenship based on hierarchical, ascriptive reasons. As one political scientist (Smith, 1993, p. 549) has written:

> For over 80% of U.S. history, its laws declared most of the world's population to be ineligible for full American citizenship solely because of their race, original nationality, or gender. For at least two-thirds of American history, the majority of the domestic adult population was also ineligible for full citizenship for the same reasons.

Such a trivializing attitude toward public conversation is what Habermas (1962/1989) assails as the commercialization of public life. Habermas (1962/1989) theorizes an ideal for public life in opposition to democratic society as formally experienced today in many nation-states. For Habermas, public life involves two key spheres of society:

(1) Civil society -- which includes all those who qualify as citizens, and whose consent must be given to form a government that becomes the political apparatus for handling collective affairs. In practice, civil society is democracy's collectivities -- all actors, whether collected into families of the private sphere or into a form of public life, from business corporations to private non-profit organizations. This is the "not government" sphere of modern democracies.

(2) The public sphere -- the public space *within* civil society where citizens meeting as equals take part in rational discussions about shared concerns. This is the weak -- mostly empty -- sector of modern democracy, which drew much attention during the 1992 U.S. presidential campaign when citizens latched on to talk shows and lavished praise on the second presidential debate where citizens rather than journalists got to grill candidates. The public sphere is a dual space -- (a) the space where civil society reacts to or critiques government, and (b) very importantly for journalists inventing public journalism, the space where interacting individuals reconstitute their identities in interaction with one another. Thus, the public sphere is not merely a formalized space for, say, a public hearing. It is where citizens interact and educate themselves; through discussion, they overcome cultural or social inequalities that otherwise result in judgments that some members of the polity are inferior arguers, and thus, implicitly inferior citizens (Calhoun, 1992, pp. 1-4).

In Habermas's scheme, the governing apparatus -- whether national or municipal -- takes account of input both from the public sphere (where public opinion forms in deliberation and conversation) and from the larger civil society (as individual and aggregated decisions, such as lobbying by corporations or social movements, public-opinion surveys or actual elections).

The Penny Press role in transformation

In the real-world case of the American democracy, even the rudimentary, flawed public sphere of 18th and 19th century small-scale town meetings, active political parties and multiple local newspapers representing multiple viewpoints, began to evaporate when "modern" industrial society overtook the nation's agrarian roots. Journalism participated in this change. The 19th century Penny Press began to transform what had been until about 1830 a tradition of newsletters-cum-party organs. In the early 19th century, scores of small, independent newspapers tied tightly to localities reflected the diversity of viewpoints within those localities as they competed with other small, local journals that proliferated across the developing American democracy when Alexis de Tocqueville toured the nation in 1831-32 (Tocqueville, 1956). By mid-20th century, newspapers had become large commercial enterprises supplied with "neutral" news by journalist/professionals. As one historian described it, "Until the 1830s, a newspaper provided a service to political parties and men of commerce; with the penny press a newspaper sold a product to a general readership and sold the readership to advertisers," (Schudson, 1978, p. 25) . Today, journalists and citizens alike recognize that newspapers are businesses; these news-manufacturing busineses mimicked the transformation that occurred in other institutions driven by capitalism's economies of scale.

'Facts' became 'news'

In one sense, the penny press invention of "objective" modern journalism was nothing to celebrate (Schudson, 1978, p. 4):

> ...[B]efore the 1830s, objectivity was not an issue. American newspapers were expected to present a partisan viewpoint, not a neutral one. Indeed, they were not expected to report the "news" of the day at all in the way we conceive it-- the idea of "news" itself was invented in the Jacksonian era.

The problem, as Habermas observed (1989, p. 169) was that, "The mass press... the early penny press...paid for the maximization of its sales with the depoliticization of its content

-- by eliminating political news and political editorials on such moral topics as intemperance and gambling." During this era, publishers such as James Gordon Bennett deployed reporters to the police station and the courts in the beginning of a move to make journalism into getting the "facts" and providing citizens "information" about what was happening in the society.

In another sense, however, the penny press transformation was laudable. The attempt to get opinion out of journalism made it possible for newspapers to speak to much greater numbers of citizens and to all classes. By removing their traditional rowdy partisanship, these publishers then could convince advertisers to subsidize the new and neutral public platform, allowing its sale for a penny, and converting it to a second purpose: a space to tell consumers about products for sale on the same pages on which they read "neutral" information about their society and its government. These capitalist publishers invented a way to make information affordable to all citizens by giving newspapers a dual purpose: transmission of both news and advertising. A representative variety of viewpoints got public airings through the 19th century, for the press continued as a mixture of partisan newspapers and "objective" journals, providing a cacophony of information for citizens of all political and economic strata. In this view, making information affordable for all was a worthy achievement.

Society's scale matters

Difficulties began as the press's role shifted in an increasingly large-scale society:

> We now often think of the press as somehow representing the people, acting as an adversary of government on behalf of the people. This is a relatively modern notion. Originally the critical forum was provided by encounters between the government and the community or their representatives. The press constituted a third voice which did not substitute for the people but merely amplified the critical process, added information to it by its own activities and represented the interests of a political party, a commercial property and a constitutionally protected technology. (Carey, 1974, pp. 231-232)

Large-scale society, operating through large institutions -- whether of commerce, education or media -- has a deleterious effect that is insufficiently chronicled in news media. When institutions of both media and government are relatively small and operate on a human scale, then the citizen-shopkeeper, the journalist and the mayor are also *neighbors* who know one another as human beings, not merely as professionals with roles in institutions of business, government and media (Calhoun, 1988). Today, journalists chronicle the efforts of bank presidents, mayors and presidents who are merely "names" to most citizens. These institutional leaders aren't known face-to-face by most people whose lives these institutional professionals affect. During the Progressive era that began about 1900, when journalist-muckrakers began to chronicle real and deplorable institutional malfeasance, newspaper and magazine readers learned very troubling information about newly distant societal institutions (Miraldi, 1989, 1995). They might reasonably wonder if all meat-packers or all businessmen or all political leaders performed as unethically as those chronicled by the muckrakers. The ability to "know" whether the local mayor or local meat-packer or banker operates properly, is lost when one no longer encounters the bank president at the weekly civic club meeting, or talks with her every Saturday at the hardware store. We lose trust, an understanding of the "other" as a human being. In such a society, we expect the worst -- perhaps wisely so. Yet such a stance toward strangers leads to people treating one another quite uncivilly in atomistic encounters on the highway to the bank, or even in face-to-face interchanges inside the bank. Society's weak civil dimension is more of an issue than many modern journalists realize.

Breakdown of the 'audience'

From their positions in large-scale institutions, both advertisers and politicians began to address, through the new mass medium, large audiences who constituted papers' circulations (Schudson 1978; Carey, 1974). With that new stance toward the public, "public opinion" became something

> to be molded and shaped within the media. Public opinion was then measured by commercial firms on the terms it was shaped.... [G]overnment and the press both pretended to represent a 'public' with whom they had but little contact. In a word, the critic, the press, like government itself, became increasingly remote and unresponsive to the public they presumed to represent. (Carey, 1974, pp. 232-233)

This problem of communication in large-scale democracies has bubbled beneath the surface of American life over most of the 20th century (Biocca, 1988, p. 127). It is an important issue for journalists who seek to communicate to a "mass" public. How do we think about who the audience is? What is our stance toward that news audience?

> What is occurring is a breakdown of the *referent* for the word *audience* .... Our earlier notions of the mass media audience rested on the extrapolations from and idealizations of physical gatherings, the theater audience, the audience at the political rally, the street-running mob. This primordial audience we can call the "physical audience." The canonical audience, the theoretical entity at the center of much mass communication theory, was modeled upon this physical audience of the theater, the meeting, the mob. Borrowing from common notions of mob psychology, the canonical audience came to be perceived as responsive, pliable, and even "passive." (Biocca, 1988, p. 127)

Biocca (1988, p. 128) commented, "Beginning with the newspaper and accelerated by the arrival of broadcast media, this physical audience was dispersed into separate cubicles--the living room." When the physical audience is divided up into isolated cubicles to imagine a world described by journalists, the audience can no longer sense reality for itself; individual audience members can no longer take cues from other audience members' reactions. They are more vulnerable to manipulation by disseminators of messages. But not only the audience members have lost their valuable moorings. As Biocca noted, journalists speak to an absent audience, whose individual reactions they must *imagine*. And the reporting process also has changed: The object of reporting also has become more elusive (Carey, 1974, p. 233):

> Rather than reporting events the press increasingly reported someone else reporting events.... The press did not for its most important stories observe the events. It reported what spokesmen, sources, authorities of different stripes said about the events. The press became the conveyor belt of observations rather than the originator of them.

A new role for the press

Journalists themselves were finding that the increasing size of business and government bureaucracies they covered also kept reporters at bay, preventing non-specialists from truly understanding and penetrating the professional cultures of society's institutions. Thus, mass media have helped to assure that "the convivial [public] discussion among individuals gave way to more or less noncommittal group activities..." (Habermas, 1962/1989, pp. 163-164).

In this new American capitalist-dominated, consumer-oriented society, which developed during the 19th century and permeates 20th century life, rational public debate continued. But Habermas described them as "so-called debates." They became a formally organized kind of "adult education" that people watch or read as entertainment. Habermas chronicled a proliferating public debate in the 19th century's religious academies, political fora and literary organizations, and even in mass media, beginning with the Penny Press, then through 20th century radio, film and television. By not long after the second World War, "debate" participants were rarely ordinary citizens; instead, participants were actors who staged public discussions as a business with "talk" as its consumer item. As Habermas (p. 164) described it,

> Today the conversation itself is administered. Professional dialogues from the podium, panel discussions, and round table shows --the rational debate of private people becomes one of the production numbers of the stars in radio and television, a salable package ready for the box office; it assumes a commodity form even at 'conferences' where anyone can 'participate.'...What can be posed as a problem is defined as a question of etiquette; conflicts, once fought out in public polemics, are demoted to the level of personal incompatibilities. Critical debate arranged in this manner ... [is] a tranquilizing substitute for action....

'Watching' substitutes for 'acting'

The implication of Habermas's phrase--"a tranquilizing substitute for action"-- should be pursued a bit further. As a critical theorist, Habermas draws attention to the possibility of change in social conditions that may be accepted as simply normal. Journalists and politicians have taken over and commercialized political debate by selling it through the mass media, whether as political ads or election coverage, thus taking control of what democratic theory specifies as a free zone, a "public sphere" where ordinary citizens can debate public life on their own terms. This citizen participation is not just necessary to conform to democratic ideals. It is more than a formality that legitimizes a government's claim to be democratic. If we understand the educational function of debate, of interacting with someone who views the world a bit differely than do we, then we can become alarmed that citizens who do not join in a robust public conversation, who watch rather than participate, are handicapped citizens who have lost important opportunities to educate themselves.

The late 20th century public sphere thus becomes as flawed as the well-critiqued 18th century version. Communication research that has studied the sources quoted in late 20th century journalism consistently has found that societal elites are much more frequently quoted as sources than ordinary citizens. Analysts examining who gets to "speak" in news stories --

print or broadcast -- find that reporters' sources are the segment of society that participated in the 18th century public sphere: the rich, the educated, the capitalists. Thus, the 20th century press has unthinkingly re-created a kind of 18th century public sphere, while insisting that news media look out for the average citizen.

Journalism's critical debate

At a critical juncture early in the 20th century, a battle was fought between two separate conceptions of how the "scientific" model could be institutionalized in journalistic practice. On one side of the debate stood journalist and media theorist Walter Lippmann, whose brilliant *Public Opinion* (Lippman, 1922, p. 195) critiqued democratic theory for

> failing to admit that self-centered opinions are not sufficient to procure good government.... In the original assumptions of democracy it was held that the expression of each man's will would spontaneously satisfy not only his desire for self-expression, but his desire for a good life....
> The democratic El Dorado has always been some perfect environment, and some perfect system of voting and representation, where the innate good will and instinctive statesmanship of every man could be translated into action.

Lippmann said democratic perfection never would come if left to ordinary citizens and ordinary journalists. He proposed that society create a class of experts -- social scientists who would be sufficiently disinterested in any outcome that they could advise government agencies of the correct actions to take based on "facts." Such a plan seems ludicrous today, but it reflects the faith that Americans placed in the promise of a true science of "man" brought into being by "objective" scientific research using statistical methods. Lippmann, who worked for 50 more years as a journalist, thought journalism couldn't help ordinary citizens to see unblinkered social reality. Journalism, he wrote, couldn't be objective:

> Every newspaper when it reaches the reader is the result of a whole series of selections as to what items shall be printed, in what position they shall be printed, how much space each shall occupy, what emphasis each shall have. There are no objective standards here. There are conventions. (Lippmann, 1922, p. 223)

Lippmann abandoned the idea that "the omnicompetent citizen," aided by the watchdog media's "restless searchlight" focusing whimsically here and there, ever adequately could watch society's institutions: Citizens and generalist journalists are no match for experts advocating a point of view. We need, he wrote, "organized intelligence" -- experts to mediate between partisans, experts to get the "facts" for the public:

> Only by insisting that problems shall not come up to him until they have passed through a procedure, can the busy citizen of a modern state hope to deal with them in a form that is intelligible. For issues, as they are stated by a partisan, almost always consist of an intricate series of facts, as he has observed them, surrounded by a large fatty mass of stereotyped phrases charged with his emotion.... On such issues the citizen...can sometimes be provoked to fear or admiration, but to judgment never.

Imagining truth as a product of conversation

But isn't there another way of imagining truth rather than as *only* objective facts understood best by experts? John Dewey thought so. When Dewey published *The Public and Its Problems* in 1927, he was responding to Lippmann with a different set of ideas about democracy, community and communication. Dewey, in contrast to Lippmann, hoped that "communication" might move the United States closer to democratic community. He argued (Dewey, 1927, p. 82) that democracy "is a word of many meanings... ." He (1927, p. 148) thought that not only is democracy a means of electing public officials; it also is, at its most inspiring, "the idea of community life itself." For Dewey, democratic community would be sought after and worked toward, and always requiring greater patience with current imperfections. "Since things do not attain such fulfillment but are in actuality distracted and interfered with, democracy ... is not a fact and never will be," Dewey commented, recognizing (1927, pp. 148-149) that, "[N]either...is there or has there ever been anything which is a community in its full measure...."

Democracy, viewed as citizens' working toward the ideal, requires acceptance of pluralism and difference. It emphasizes careful language and rigorous attempts at understanding across large-scale society's inevitably clashing ideologies.

Problems of scale

Dewey was a visionary. He did not "theorize comprehensively enough the systematic thwarting of democratic participation by modern social organizations and interorganizational environments" (Antonio & Kellner, 1992, p. 292). What we had, and have, is a problem of scale. That "thwarting" of democratic participation in modern large-scale society is precisely what Habermas and Carey argue must be attacked. It *is* an intractable issue of modern life. Dewey noted the massive changes in society's scale between the 1890s and 1920s. Dewey's colleague, Robert Park, saw such times as periods of "social disorganization" that naturally occur and recur in social life. We might cautiously compare the late 19th century to the late 20th century (Carey, 1989b). Certainly, both eras struggle with unprecedented changes in society's scale. In the 1990s, technology and the use of technology in the media of communication make global issues matter more to individual citizens, in the same way that technology employed by new industries of both transportation and communication in the 1890s brought national issues to the attention of citizens in small communities: "Communication had enlarged the scale of society, brought distant and unknowable forces to bear on community life .... Yet communication offered the hope of transcending the community and reconstituting society and democracy on an enlarged scale" (Carey, 1989a, p. 266) .

Making Wise Decisions

Such hopes drive many communitarian schemes for giving decision-making power to citizens of the democracy in the 1990s (Fishkin, 1991, pp. 54-64). But such schemes today lack Dewey's understanding of the importance of language and social interaction in a communication process whose goal is making wise decisions. Wise decisions are a product of interaction, of people actually talking with one another and learning from their exchanges of ideas. In *The Public and Its Problems* Dewey suggested that society should find ways to restore citizens' ability to guide the democracy. A public that fails to interact in search of solutions to collective problems is too much affected by the public opinion industry, media and an "overall surplus of divergent information" (Antonio & Kellner, 1992, p. 283). With ever more channels to supply greater and greater quantities of information, citizens today have become progressively more overwhelmed than in Dewey's day by media texts supplying decontextualized information to individual consumers rather than encouraging collective discussion in a language that values and supports citizen participation.

Dewey touted community as an antidote to the individualism that was, and is today, isolating people who pursue individual happiness in the marketplace. Millions of individual consumer decisions create collective problems that must be addressed collectively.

The press and its problems

Dewey thought that journalists might be able to "create or restore public life on a scale matching that of industry and politics" (Carey, 1989, p. 273). Dewey's has seemed a forlorn hope. Modern life has few moments when citizen-consumers either collectively recognize a particular good as one shared by all, or realize that their individual consumer choices create large public problems. *How* might we increase the duration and quantity of such moments?

First, journalists must understand that they are romanticizing individualism at a time when, as Calhoun (1993, p. 7) points out, "The ideal of radical self-sufficiency...makes little sense for employees and consumers in the 1990s even if it was more plausible on the frontier." Then, journalists must add to their repertoire both an appreciation of the need for rational, respectful interaction between people of differing identities and values, and an ethic that moves journalists to promote such interactions.

Reconceptualizing community

Calhoun calls attention to the national, even global, qualities of many of society's institutions -- corporations, including news media, for one important example. One community in Kansas, say, Wichita, has little chance of negotiating on equal terms with Boeing Aircraft. And that sort of imbalance occurred in 1993 as aircraft companies laid off hundreds of Wichitans. Citizens urgently need collectively to discuss such public problems. They can't delay debate until they have achieved the kind of community normally imagined when we speak that term. We need an institution that self-consciously works in ways something like Habermas's public sphere. Yet we must beware of equating the concepts of "community" and "public sphere" (Calhoun, 1993, p. 4). Today, a nation, or even a state or a large city, cannot be a "community" in the sense that every inhabitant of that political jurisdiction can feel closeness and agreement, as so many writers hope for in a 1990s longing for an end to conflict. When we talk about community, as Raymond Williams (1985, p. 76) pointed out in his slim *Keywords* volume, we envision warm relationships. With Calhoun (1993, p. 13), we instead must face facts: Community is "insufficient for confronting the challenges to American collective identity." We must see that:

> We need not just a language of community that celebrates our commonalities but a language of public life that does not depend solely on such images of similarity and underlying unity. This approach to public life must start with recognition of deep differences among us and must restore our faith in meaningful communication across lines of difference. (Calhoun, 1993, p. 13)

We need an institution that understands that in addition to truths found by examining *facts* that human beings also create truths through interactions aimed at making *value judgments.* To achieve that latter kind of truth, we need, as Calhoun (1993, p. 13) correctly points out, "a recognition of interdependence despite difference, and a conception of public discourse that grants participants respect and dignity on bases other than familiarity." Mere tolerance is not adequate; we need to bridge differences to reach practical goals in interdependent communities.

However, in talking despite our differences, we can only expect to learn something about another point of view. As we engage in debate and conflict, we can believe, with Robert Park, that "communication promotes tolerance, assimilation, and even intimacy after an initial phase of conflict" (Czitrom, 1982, p. 119). Park, Dewey's student and also an ex-newspaperman, called this stance "dialectical communication" -- a process or practice of arriving at truth by exchanging logical arguments. Park probably was too optimistic about achieving intimacy through dialectical communication, but in its hope for achieving tolerance, Park's idea resembles Habermas's theory of communicative action: people interacting must be oriented to understanding the other in order to communicate (Habermas, 1993a; Habermas, 1993b).

Public journalists build social connections

Today's "public" or "civic" journalists can move Park's and Dewey's ideas into the 21st century . As journalists attempt to create communication across lines of difference, they might usefully think of their task as creating among citizens a social good that has been called "reciprocity." Defined by philosophers as giving good back for good received, reciprocity is a fundamental moral virtue (Becker, 1986). In human communication, reciprocity develops as we gain understanding of people who don't share our perspectives. Reciprocity is:

> shared knowledge of the perspectives of others and the interests underlying those perspectives.... For reciprocity to be achieved..., individual citizens must possess some political knowledge, ...cognition that facilitates ... social interaction. It is through communicative acts that reciprocity is achieved.(Rucinski, 1991, p. 187)

Arguing that democracy is "the process of interactive decision-making," Rucinski (1991, p. 184) said a focus on reciprocity "makes communication an essential component of participatory democratic theory." With Dewey, Rucinski sees participatory democracy as "a set of continuous communicative processes that takes its concrete form in political discussion and debate." When we take reciprocity as our communication goal, we seek, first, to understand another person rather than simply stating what we alone believe to be true (Habermas, 1993a).

Without reciprocity as its goal, a "debate," even if we call it a "discussion," is simply disagreement --as voters have seen in modern televised presidential debates. To achieve political reciprocity, citizens must desire to understand their differences and the reasons for them, rather than to refuse to communicate across their differences.

In describing reciprocity, Rucinski (p. 187) defines citizens' talk about politics to include

> any concern of citizens that involves the allocation of resources. Talk of wages, the availability of affordable housing and child care, the costs of health care and insurance, the division of labor in the home, the safety of products, and decision-making on the job are all "political" concerns in that they involve issues of autonomy, power, and the negotiation of the rights of individuals and the rights of the system.

This definition is key to creating a different journalistic discourse, for many journalists imagine politics narrowly, as candidates vying for public office. Such limited visions leave out ideas, values and issues. As Rucinski noted, "... [P]olitical participation does not end with talk. ...[C]onciliation, collective decision-making, and the enactment of shared goals are the mainstays of fully participatory democratic systems." Armed with such a concept, journalists, public-opinion researchers and journalism educators have a means of judging the success or failure of the public journalism effort.

Habermas's discourse ethics

To move fully into the Montesquieu-Dewey stream of democratic theory, public journalists need Habermas's concept of "discourse ethics." Habermas (1962/1989, 1989, 1993a, 1993b) has embarked on a sustained project to theorize communication in modern life. Recently, he has developed a "discourse ethics" (1993a & 1993b). Journalism educators can play a key role in arming public journalists by teaching discourse ethics just as we now teach novices such formulas as (1) always include who, what,when, where, why and how in stories, or (2) an event is "news" if the elements of conflict, controversy, timeliness or proximity are involved. These are conventions (as Lippmann charged) to make it easy to find news. Discourse ethics is an approach to story-telling once a journalist identifies an event as "news." It is most useful when truth claims and cultural values are disputed, and therefore, are controversial topics of public discourse. Using Habermas's theory, we can create an ethical system for public journalists to use in helping citizens to constitute a democratic public sphere.

Reconceptualizing The 'Objectivity' Ideal

Habermasian discourse ethics' key element is a "universalization principle" -- which states that societal norms are valid only if they win approval (or could win approval) by all participants "in a practical discourse" (Habermas, 1993a, p. 93) . Because journalists focus on being impartial and because their work aims to foster discussion of substantive issues in democratic life, discourse ethics matches journalistic goals. Learning discourse ethics enables the mental shift that editor Davis Merritt says journalists must make to practice public journalism, but which he does not provide a method for achieving (Merritt, 1995). That mental shift does not require journalists to toss out their core ideal of "objectivity," defined as a kind of "due impartiality" (Hackett, 1984,). Discourse ethics encourages such a rational approach.

Stepping back from conflict.

Habermas's universalization principle is a way of reconceptualizing the journalistic search for truth -- news. We start with the assertion that "all concerned in principle take part, freely and equally, in a cooperative search for the truth, where nothing coerces anyone except the force of the better argument" (Habermas, 1993a, p. 198). This principle forces journalists to recognize that the speed of communication and transportation in modern society regularly brings together individuals of widely varying backgrounds; they can't coordinate their actions by presuming a background of shared values. Instead they can coordinate their actions through journalism that approaches story-telling differently. Using a discourse-ethics approach, journalists stop simplistically framing stories as battles of extremes. Any dispute has more than what journalists call "both" sides. People cluster along a continuum at different points; there are, for example, more stances toward abortion than simply "pro" or "anti."

Discourse ethicists may approach news stories traditionally, by interviewing disputants separately about their ideas. But their goal will not be to write a 15-inch story drawing the most sensational and provocative portrait of a dispute. A public journalist modeling discourse ethics uses generous quotes, not soundbites, to provide a sense of the complexity of a dispute, and to point out not only where disputants disagree, but also their common ground. When possible, newspaper journalists would encourage citizens who disagree to talk with one another, acting as a mediator for discussions, and describing the results; broadcast journalists could present such discussions live, or tape them for later broadcast.

However, discourse ethics does not require consensus or agreement, merely a focus on what is common. Such journalistic stance aims to reflect to the community both the common and divergent meanings of an event or an action. It encourages a community conversation admitting multiple perspectives to a search for collective truth. This approach avoids standoffs over values; it encourages disputants into discourse, but doesn't push a specific outcome.

Modeling truth as meaning.

Discourse ethics models the two fundamental principles of Habermasian moral philosophy: "Act with an orientation to mutual understanding and allow everyone the communicative freedom to take positions on validity claims" (Habermas, 1993b, p. 66). Journalistic practice embodying such principles is orientated toward understanding and to making a news medium a forum open to all people potentially concerned who will cooperate in a search for the "truth." It admits to discussion all who seek a part in defining what is true -- that is, what is meaningful to each participant. In that way journalists move away from sneering cynicism and recognize that each individual is socialized within a community and needs recognition by and within that community.

Habermas (as do Blumer and Dewey) recognizes that society cannot create justice for the individual without assuring the community's solidarity. Thus, an adequate ethics

> must always solve two tasks at once. They must emphasize the inviolability of the individual by postulating equal respect for the dignity of each individual. But they must also protect the web of intersubjective relations of mutual recognition by which these individuals survive as members of a community. To these two complementary aspects correspond the principles of justice and solidarity respectively. The first postulates equal respect and equal rights for the individual, whereas the second postulates empathy and concern for the well-being of one's neighbor. ... [B]oth principles have one and the same root: the specific vulnerability of the human species, which individuates itself through sociation. Morality thus cannot protect the one without the other. It cannot protect the rights of the individual without also protecting the well-being of the community to which he belongs. (Habermas, 1993a, p. 200)

Journalism Educators' Habermasian Role

A failure to recognize the necessity of these twin tasks was a fundamental failure of much early liberal democratic theory that still tilts journalistic practice toward opposing the individual to the community. Communication educators who teach journalistic practice spend most of our time drilling students in rote procedures for writing story leads, rather than calling attention to the fundamental link, particularly in a democracy, between individuals and their community -- which is journalists' *reason* for writing that lead. If such an understanding permeated journalism curricula, novice journalists would recognize that humans are rights-bearing individuals who nevertheless form their identities in communities, and who therefore, need "news" that helps them to *function communicatively* within a community. Communication scholars can advocate an ethics to further that task. We have one concept to measure news media success or failure to pursue such a course: Rucinski's conception of reciprocity measures presence or absence of the understanding that discourse ethics strives to create.

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Expanding the Public Conversation -- or Just Sounding Off?
An Appraisal of the Newspaper Call-in Comment Line

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Submitted to the Civic Journalism Interest Group for presentation at the AEJMC annual meeting, Washington, D.C., August 1995.

Expanding the Public Conversation -- or Just Sounding Off?
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Abstract

A content analysis of six weeks of one urban daily's call-in column and its letters to the editor is analyzed using the journalism-as-conversation model. The study finds evidence that such columns do expand public dialogue in various ways. Lively exchanges of opinion about public issues take place. However, the study finds editors ought to consider ways to improve the conversation. Publishing reader sound bites limits the quality of the dialogue.

Expanding the Public Conversation -- or Just Sounding Off? An Appraisal of the Newspaper Call-in Comment Line

Several researchers have called on the media to do a better job of inspiring public dialogue (Anderson, Dardenne, and Killenberg, 1994; Shepard, 1994; Miller, 1994; Rosen, 1993; Christians, Ferré, and Fackler, 1993; Lambeth, 1992; Clark, 1992; Keane, 1991; Hagopian, 1993). Anderson, et al., present a "journalism as public conversation" model and propose that the news media

> promote and sustain public communication by reaching out to a public that will otherwise lose its myriad (but uncoordinated) voices to organized lobbyists . . . and the menagerie of other authorities of conventional wisdom that crowd our pages and airwaves" (1994, 31).

The comment line, called by various names such as "Sound Off" or "Your Turn," is one way newspapers have tried to reach out to the public. The comment line falls within the tradition of the letters-to-the-editor columns on newspaper opinion pages, but veers enough from that tradition to elicit considerable controversy among journalists and the public. One editorial page editor defended his newspaper's call-in column by arguing that its popularity provides a point of entry to the opinion page and helps to maintain interest in the opinion page (Hagopian, 1994). Another editor, however, criticized the call-in columns as "verbal Nerf Balls" requiring no thought to send and generating little when read (Reinken, 1994). A member of the public wrote to editors of one urban daily to complain about participants of its Sound Off column:

> I've held off as long as I can. Now it's time for me to sound off about the Sound Off column.
>
> When this was first added . . ., it seemed like a pretty good idea. If people didn't have the ability to write a letter to the editor or if they didn't have enough time, there was now an opportunity to voice opinions about things concerning the city . . .
>
> But look what's happened. We now have . . . a way to hurt people and their families . . . And the callers never have to give their names" (Curtis, 1994).

Callers to the call-in comment lines are often allowed to remain anonymous and to speak on whatever subject they please. Indeed, the above-quoted letter to the editor was responded to by callers to the paper's Sound Off column. One caller agreed with the letter writer, but another criticized her for failing to understand that anonymity is necessary to protect callers from retaliation by their employers ("Sound Off," *Mobile Register*, Oct. 19, 1994, 2A).

It appears that called-in comments are usually selected and edited by a participating newspaper's editors. Hagopian (1994), for example, reported his newspaper received 18,000 calls a year yet had the space to publish only 6,000 (15). A typical advertisement for another paper's "Sound Off" column announces that comments will be edited:

> When you call "Sound Off" you are free to discuss any topic you wish. We don't guarantee all comments will make the column, but we will print as many as possible. We will also have to edit the comments to make sure they are not libelous . . .(*Mobile [Ala.] Press-Register*, special advertising insert, Feb. 26, 1994).

The extent of oversight and other details of how the press handles call-in comment columns must be extrapolated from just such anecdotal evidence because little research has been published on the subject. Researchers have contributed much to our understanding of the letters to the editor tradition (Foster and Friederich, 1937; Forsythe, 1950; Tarrant, 1957; Davis and Rarick, 1964; Vacin, 1965; Klempner, 1966; Haskins, 1967; Rosenthal, 1969; Roberts, Sikorski and Paisley, 1969; Grey and Brown, 1970; Singletary, 1976; Renfro, 1979; Singletary and Cowling, 1979; Lemert and Larkin, 1979; and Pasternack, 1988; Pritchard and Berkowitz, 1991). And some related research and trade and popular press reports suggest findings that may relate to call-in comment lines (Cotter, Perry, and Stovall, 1994; LaRose and Atkin, 1992; Watson, 1993; Ahern, 1992; Viladas, 1992). A survey of research literature, however, reveals little about the extent of call-in comment columns in U.S. newspapers, the standards and procedures relating to the columns, or the characteristics of those who participate in the columns. While this paper cannot answer all the questions that are unanswered about call-in comment lines, it is an attempt to begin filling the research void.

Research Questions

Building on the concept of journalism as conversation proposed by Anderson, et al. (1994, hereafter referred to as Anderson), this study poses several questions relating to the extent and quality of public dialogue generated by the call-in comment line column published by a Southern urban daily.

Anderson argues that journalism's primary role is "to stimulate public dialogue on issues of common concern to a democratic public" (*xx*). If the call-in comment column is serving this purpose, then callers will be primarily discussing public affairs issues such as local, state, and national government, elections, politics, education, crime and criminal justice, the availability and quality of health care, the quality of life in the community and the nation, and the performance of public and semi-public institutions. Consequently, this study's first question is:

1. What subjects do callers discuss when they call the call-in comment line?

In addition to being concerned about public issues, members of a democratic community ought to converse with one another, Anderson explains. The press, in this context, becomes one of the conversationalists as well as facilitates the conversation among members of the public. "News, in a more fundamental sense, emerges as a community converses with itself" (Anderson, 102). Likewise, social philosopher John Dewey, in proposing a conversational model of community, stressed that "ideas which are not communicated, shared, and reborn in expression are but soliloquy, and soliloquy is but broken and imperfect thought" (1927, 218;

quoted in Anderson, 21; Dewey's model of self and society is shared and expanded by Mead, 1934; Berger and Luckmann, 1967; Habermas, 1987; and others). This raises, then, the issue of reciprocity. If public dialogue is being generated by the call-in comment column, then there should be evidence that the published comments are participating in a conversation by referring to previous news stories, editorials, and columns, called-in comments, or letters to the editor. "To speak," observes Ong, "you have to address another or others" (1982, 176). Which Clark interprets to mean that "communication is a process of social interaction constituted of an ongoing exchange of inherently interdependent statements and responses" (1990, 2). "True conversation cannot be analyzed apart from its past or its anticipated future" (Anderson, 30). Moreover, there should be a healthy exchange of different ideas. Clark argues, for example, that "pluralism requires that conflicting notions of shared, social knowledge coexist, and that the conflicts themselves be publically explored" (1990, 57). Hence, this paper's second and third research questions are:

2. Do comments published in the call-in comment column directly respond to previously published comments, news stories, editorials, letters to the editor, or columns?

3. Do published comments provide a mix of political and social policy perspectives?

Anderson warns, however, that public dialogue suffers when reader comments are boiled down "to little more than messages stating 'You are right' or 'You are wrong'" (34). Consequently, the quality of the comments becomes important in assessing the called-in comment line's effectiveness. The comments ought to provide more than unsubstantiated opinions if they are going to contribute to a public decision-making process. They ought to add factual information to the debate. The fourth research question is:

4. Do the published, called-in comments primarily offer opinions, factual information, or both?

Finally, for comparison purposes, letters to the editor published in the same paper during the same time period were examined along with the called-in comments, and a fifth research question is asked:

5. Do the conversational attributes of called-in comments differ from those of letters to the editor?

Methodology

A content analysis was conducted on all letters to the editor and all comments in the "Sound Off" column of a medium-size Southern metropolitan daily newspaper published from Sept. 18, 1994, to and including Nov. 12, 1994.[1] The newspaper was appropriate for this study because its call-in comment column had been published for at least one year at the time of study. This was long enough that the column had become an established daily feature. In addition, the newspaper promoted the column, frequently with half-page house ads. Moreover, the paper continued to promote letters to the editor and published them daily on the opinion page. The letters to the editor were signed; the called-in comments were not. Newspaper personnel were gatekeepers for both, selecting letters and comments for publication and editing for length and content. No prior restraints were put on subject matter that could be discussed by callers or letter writers.

The time period was chosen to take advantage of the fact that state and off-year national elections were held during the time span studied. If the newspaper was in fact encouraging public dialogue about public issues, this should be particularly evident during periods immediately prior to elections. Furthermore, a study of approximately eight consecutive weeks (56 consecutive days) was conducted (instead of a randomized sampling of comments and letters) in order to maximize the study of what can be called the "reciprocity factor" -- the extent to which called-in comments and letters to the editor were called in or written in order to respond to previously published items in the paper. This was important in order to consider the dialogic nature of the comments and letters.

A total of 663 called-in comments and 240 letters to the editor were coded, representing the entire population. Each item was coded for length, geographic focus, subject matter, reciprocity, character of comment, and quality of comment.[2] Furthermore, in order to quantify the extent to which readers' comments and letters represented a spectrum of political and social opinion, they were coded for political party references and, if applicable, social philosophy.[3] Each also was coded as to whether the caller or writer was "whistle-blowing" and whether an editor's response was printed to clarify or respond to the comment or letter.[4] Two coders were used with 86.6% reliability. Pearson chi-square with goodness of fit was used to analyze the data.

Results

The newspaper's "Sound Off" column averaged 11.8 comments daily (the most carried in one day was 20) while its opinion page published an average of 4 letters daily. The length of the published call-in comments ranged from 4 words ("I miss George Bush." [Sept. 18, 1994]) to 106 words, with a mean of 38. The letters ranged in length from 28 words to 642 with a mean of 186.

More than half of the "Sound Off" comments dealt with local issues (56.7%) and more than a fourth (28.1%) concerned national issues. State issues accounted for 11.5% of the comments, while international issues barely registered. Local and national issues dominated the letters to the editor as well, yet there was a significant difference between the distributions. In contrast to the call-in comments, the letters were more evenly divided among local, state, and national issues (See Table 1).

Politics and government dominated the subject matter for both the call-in comments and letters. Approximately half of each fell into this category. Callers showed considerable concern for education and public safety issues, as well, while letter writers showed more concern for media and quality of life issues. There was a significant difference in their distributions (See Table 2).

Table 1

Geographical Focus

	Call-ins	Letters
Local	56.7%	35.0%
State	11.5	19.6
Nation	28.1	39.2
International	1.6	2.1
General	2.7	4.2
	N=663	N=240

$X^2 = 34.45$, 4 d.f., $p<.0005$

Both comments and letters had a strong reciprocity factor with no significant difference in this characteristic. Yet *what* each referenced was significantly different. "Sound Off" comments tended to reference previous news stories and other "Sound Off" comments, while letters to the editor were more likely to reference a news story, an editorial, or a column by a local writer. This may suggest some exclusivity among those who call in and those who write letters, with letter-writers more oriented toward the opinion page. However, there were several letters (n=14, or 5.8%) that were written in response to comments published in "Sound Off" and some 6.3% were written in response to previously published letters. Only about 2%

Table 2

Subjects

	Call-ins	Letters
Politics/Govt.	51.0%	52.1%
Education	10.0	2.9
Public Safety	13.0	5.4
Health Care	0.6	2.5
Media	5.4	11.3
Quality of Life	8.3	11.3
Business	2.3	0.4
Religion	1.2	1.7
Other	7.8	12.5
	N=663	N=240

$X^2 = 42.87$, 8 d.f., $p<.0005$

of the "Sound Off" comments made direct reference to a previously published letter to the editor (See Table 3).

Table 3

Reciprocity

	Call-ins	Letters
Yes	86.3%	80.8%
No	13.6	19.2
	N=663	N=240

X^2 = 3.64, 1 d.f., no sig. at $p<.05$

Reference

	Call-ins	Letters
News Story	59.7%	34.2%
Editorial	1.2	10.8
Local Column	3.0	16.7
Synd. Column	1.4	2.5
"Sound Off"	15.2	5.8
Letter to Editor	2.0	6.3
Other	0.9	2.1
Unclear	2.6	2.1
Not Applicable	14.0	19.6
	N=663	N=240

X^2 = 144.28, 8 d.f., $p<.0005$

About half of the comments and letters were made or written to present an opposing side to a previous position publicized either in the news columns or in the opinion columns. A little more than 19% were made or written to voice agreement or offer supporting arguments to previous positions. And slightly less than a third were neutral. There was no significant difference between comments and letters in this category (See Table 4).

There was considerable difference, however, in whether an item offered an opinion, presented facts, or mixed opinion and factual information. Called-in comments overwhelmingly (79.6%) stated opinions only. Almost half of the letters stated opinions only while more than half of the letters (52.9%) provided both opinion and factual information (See Table 5).

There was no significant difference between comments and letters in obvious political party affiliation. Both were equally shy on loyalty to a party. The overwhelming majority of both (86.2% for comments and 80% for letters) showed no overt preference for either Republicans or Democrats (See Table 6). This may be a reflection of the American voter's independence, or it may be that newspaper personnel reject or edit out comments and letters that are heavily partisan. However, when a political party preference was clearly discernable, in both the call-ins and the letters, the preference was substantially for the

Table 4

Character of Content

	Call-ins	Letters
Oppositional	50.5%	53.8%
Supportive	19.2	19.2
Neutral	30.3	27.1
	N=663	N=240

X^2 = .98, 2 d.f., no sig. at $p<.05$

Table 5

Quality of Comments

	Call-ins	Letters
Opinion Only	79.6%	45.0%
Facts Only	0.8	1.7
Both	16.9	52.9
Query	2.7	0.4
	N=663	N=240

X^2 = 117.51, 2 d.f., $p<.0005$

Republican Party. This may indicate a bias by those newspaper personnel who choose which comments and letters to publish, or it may reflect the political loyalties of the newspaper's readership (See Table 6).

The majority of both comments and letters were not applicable to social philosophy categories because they clearly did not concern matters of social policy, yet letters to the editor were significantly more likely to express social philosophical positions (See Table 7). Both comments and letters, however, tended to be more supportive of conservative social views than liberal ones when views were expressed (See Table 7). Conservative viewpoints were expressed in approximately 40% of the 197 call-in comments

Table 6

Political Affiliation

	Call-ins	Letters
Democrat	4.2%	4.6%
Republican	8.1	15.0
Neither	86.2	80.0
	N=663	N=240

$X^2 = 3.98$, 2 d.f., no sig. at $p<.05$

Political Affiliation When Party Indicated

	Call-ins	Letters
Democrat	37%	24%
Republican	63	76
	N=85	N=47

$X^2 = 2.38$, 1 d.f., no sig. at .05

that expressed a view and in nearly 52% of the 114 letters that expressed such viewpoints. Liberal positions were expressed in 16.7% of the call-in comments and 13.1% of the letters.

Table 7

Social Philosophy

	Call-ins	Letters
Conservative	11.9%	24.6%
Liberal	5.0	6.3
Neither/Unclear	12.8	16.7
Not Applicable	70.3	52.5
	N=663	N=240

X^2 = 29.43, 3 d.f., p<.0005

Social Philosophy When One Is Expressed

	Call-ins	Letters
Conservative	40.1%	51.7%
Liberal	16.7	13.1
Neither/Unclear	43.1	35.1
	N=197	N=114

X^2 = 3.98, 2 d.f., no sig. at p<.05

"Whistle-blowing" and editor's notes were negligible. Only 1 of the called-in comments and 8 of the letters were considered to be "exposé." Editors attached notes to only 4 call-in comments and to none of the letters.

Discussion

These results suggest that the introduction of a call-in comment column in a metropolitan newspaper may broaden the participation and the composition of public dialogue but also may lessen its quality. The call-in column allowed the newspaper to publish comments from an average of about 12 additional readers each day, compared to giving space to but 4 letters to the editor a day.[5] In addition, it appears that the comment line has widened the range of subject matter that members of the public discuss in the forum offered by the newspaper, but the format may actually diminish the effectiveness of the forum for generating useful public dialogue.

To expand on these points, a detailed consideration of the research questions follows:

What subjects do callers discuss when they call the call-in comment line?

It appears that more than half of the call-in comments that get published concern a local political or government issue. Typical is the following one published on Oct. 31, 1994:

> If [the mayor] gets this garbage tax at $4 or even $1, we should have a recall election under the "Lemon Law"

> -- just like you do with an automobile that's a jinx -- and throw him and the whole City Council, the School Board and every elected official in Mobile County and the state out of office.

Another fourth will concern a national issue, such as the following, which appeared Sept. 18, 1994:

> It is incredible to me that so many people call and defend Bill Clinton. Any person who is informed can see he is the most dangerous person that has ever infiltrated our government.

To a lesser extent, the call-in comment may concern a local education or public safety issue. A typical education-related comment on Sept. 27, 1994, pointed out how shabby the county's schools had become and sarcastically asked: "Haven't the school board ever heard of maintaining, or do the janitors get three months off like the teachers do?" Commenting on public safety, one caller on Oct. 26 expressed "outrage" over a drive-by shooting and declared that "as long as criminals run the streets, violence will only get worse in this city." Expressing a different attitude, a caller on Nov. 7 criticized a recent roadblock by state troopers as "really not what we need here in America."

Politics and government led the list of subjects for letters to the editor as well, but letter writers were more likely to write on state and national matters than on local ones. This may reflect the number of letters sent in by officials of statewide organizations to publicize an issue or clarify facts. During the study period, for example, the paper published letters from the chairperson of the Victim Service Providers Committee, the executive director of the state Republican Party, and the executive director of the Association of County Commissioners of Alabama, among other officials from statewide and national organizations.

It is clear, however, that both letters and call-in comments published during the study period generated discussion about "issues of common concern to a democratic public," to use Anderson's phrasing. While there were a few call-ins that discussed such issues as how perfumes can be unpleasant for those allergic to them and getting dogs tattooed for identification, 92 percent of the call-in comments and 88 percent of the letters to the editor fit within one of the public-issue categories coded. In addition, many of those that fit within the "other" category also concerned public issue matters, such as the need for quality parenting or how it is important to treat handicapped persons with respect.

> *Do comments published in the call-in comment column directly respond to previously published comments, news stories, editorials, letters to the editor, or columns?*
>
> *Do published comments provide a mix of political and social policy perspectives?*

Anderson (1994) stresses the need for "true conversation" that involves the qualities of reciprocity and an exchange of differing ideas. Since any print-mediated conversation requires some lag time, it is difficult for a "Sound Off" column to truly achieve the "immediacy of presence," that Anderson says is one of the qualities of dialogue (27). And yet, reciprocity does occur. A news story may begin the dialogue by inciting a reader to call the comment line to offer his or her opinion, which may cause another reader to call the comment line or write a letter to the editor, which then can cause even further discussion mediated by the newspaper.

An example of this occurred in late September and early October 1994. Reacting to news stories, several callers to "Sound Off" discussed the quality of the local school system. These comments prompted a school teacher to call in to argue that "you [taxpayers] are going to get what you are paying for. Until you raise the property taxes, you will continue to get nothing for nothing" (Sept. 29, 1994). The teacher went on to draw attention to a news story in the previous day's paper that reported the state had the second-lowest property taxes in the United States. At least 4 callers replied to the teacher, including 1 two days later, who stated: "To the caller who said that we have the second lowest property taxes in the country: We've got the highest sales taxes of anybody in the country, and we don't need property taxes to go up like sales taxes." The teacher's comment also resulted in a letter to the editor that questioned the quality of teaching in the schools. The letter to the editor was answered by 2 call-in comments, 1 by a caller who agreed and commented: "I think everyone who's demanding higher taxes for schools should read [the letter]. . . " The other comment was by the teacher who sparked the exchange: "I'm the 'nothing for nothing' teacher one of your letter writers on the editorial page has misunderstood, and I would like to clarify. . . ." The discussion involved individual comments by members of the public as well as a follow-up comment from at least one person in a give-and-take dialogue with the others.

All but about 14 percent of the comments in the call-in column were direct responses to previous views published in the paper. Most responded to a news story, although a considerable number (n=101, 15.2%) responded to previous callers and another 2% responded to letters to the editor. Moreover, it could be that while the comment appeared to refer to the news report, it could have been spurred by someone else's previous comment. It was sometimes difficult to tell whether the caller was replying to the story or to another caller. In addition, almost 6% of the letters responded directly to a "Sound Off" comment, even though the letters were more likely to be responding to a news story, an editorial, a column, or another letter.

There also was an element that resembles what Anderson describes as the "intrusion of the unexpected." During the discussion of a proposed garbage fee, one caller to "Sound Off" went off on a tangent about refuse haulers damaging trash cans and another caller wondered why the sewer fee was calculated as part of the water bill.

The data indicate, however, that the call-in comment line may not result in a wide range of political and social positions being presented in the public dialogue. Newspaper readership in urban areas will not necessarily include residents whose views are significantly different from those of the dominant culture. Urban dailies usually speak primarily to middle and upper class consumers (Bogart, 1991; Bogart, 1989, 333-352; Williams, 1992; Shriver, 1992; Bagdikian, 1983, 176-194). Even when those with unpopular political and social opinions read the mainstream press, they may be reluctant or uninterested in participating in a public discussion (Gonzenbach, 1992; Noelle-Neumann, 1984). In addition, studies of radio talk show participants have found them to be mainly conservative people with firm opinions (Viles, 1993a, 1993b; Kincaid, 1993; Lewis, 1993). So it was not surprising to find in this study that called-in comments in which a political party was given obvious preference, the Republican Party was the party whose views were expressed most of the time (63% of the time). The Democratic Party was represented in about a third of the calls. Only one comment was found that indicated support for a different political party. In addition, when a social philosophy was expressed, it was more likely than not to be conservative.

This was not much different from what was found among the letters to the editor. About 76% of the letters that expressed a political party preference represented the views of the Republican Party. None of the letters indicated support for a party other than the GOP or the Democrats. Conservative social philosophy also dominated letters to the editor when a social philosophy was clearly expressed.

This raises the specter of the call-in comment line's being merely another format that ends up supporting entrenched opinion. However, the fact that at least half of the comments and half of the letters were critical of previous comments suggests that an exchange of political and social philosophy may be occurring. While there were a sizable number of comments and letters that did not indicate a preference for a political party or a social philosophy, this may have been because the issue being discussed was not political or the callers and letter writers may have been among the large number of Americans who refuse to associate with either of the dominant political parties (Kellerman, Kohut, and Bowman, 1990, 2, 12-13, 22; Holloway with George, 1986, 215-234; Everett, 1982; Ginsberg, 1986, 166-180).

Anderson's dialogic concepts of "collaborative orientation" and "mutual implication" underscore the importance of disagreement during discussions of public issues (27-28). Clearly, oppositional comments that could result in a dialectical meeting of the minds were a prevalent part of the discussions. About half of the called-in comments were made to challenge previously expressed views. There was no evidence, however, that the dialogue resulted in any changed minds. In discussing the conversational quality of vulnerability, Anderson writes that "a conversation worthy of the name involves persons willing to let persuasive messages change their minds and adjust their actions" (27). While changes may have occurred, the dialogue usually stopped before evidence of changes could be detected, leaving the impression that such call-in columns are sterile repositories of individual, unchanging perspectives. Future research that studies audience response may alter this impression.

If this impression is confirmed by future research, however, the cause may be related to the fourth research question asked in this study:

> *Do the published, called-in comments primarily offer opinions, factual information, or both?*

Research results show that most of the called-in comments offered little more than the caller's opinion. Because limited space is allotted to the comments (until Nov. 6, 1994, one column was allocated; after that date, a column and a half was allocated), the comments are often no more than short sound bites of emotion rather than reasoned dialogue. In 1988 the average television political sound bite was 9 seconds, which would accommodate approximately 22 or 23 words (Hallin, 1992). The average number of words in a "Sound Off" comment was 38. In this respect, they resemble quotes used in news stories.[6]

Consider, for example, the news story "Garbage fee is near OK," which ran on the newspaper's Nov. 1, 1994, front page. It reported on the city council's discussion of the city budget and alternative types of taxes and fees, including a proposed garbage fee, that could be imposed to generate increased revenues for the city. The story quoted only city council members and the mayor. The swing vote for approval of the garbage fee could come from one city councilman, who indicated he was leaning toward approving it. He was quoted: "Four dollars does not seem to be unreasonable . . ." The entire quote reflected no more than the councilman's opinions. Another council member responded she would vote against the fee because "it's like a heroin fix, and that's how the people will view it." Once again, a direct quote was used to express an opinion and emotions.

In the call-in comments column, similar quips on following days added to the story through direct quotes from citizens. The comments would not have been out of place if they had been inserted into the original story to represent views of members of the public. One reader, for example, exclaimed in the paper's "Sound Off" column: "Every time you turn around in [this city], somebody wants to tax somebody. How about going into downsizing and making our system a little more efficient?" The following day, a

"Sound Off" caller suggested what was needed instead was a "stupidity tax on politicians."

Unsupported opinions are not usually considered effective arguments for persuading people who disagree. It would take an audience response study, however, to determine whether letters to the editor that include both opinions and factual information can be any more effective in persuading citizens towards a particular political belief or choice.

Do the conversational attributes of called-in comments differ from those of letters to the editor?

The data show considerable differences between some aspects of called-in comments and letters to the editor, suggesting that something is being contributed by the call-in column. It is not simply an oral version of letters to the editor. Callers seem to some extent to talk about different things than letter writers write about. They also seem to respond differently to items in the paper. Letter writers appear more involved in the considered opinions of editorialists and political columnists, whereas callers tend to be more interested in responding to the news stories, or at least to each other. Callers seem to be more local in their interests.

On the negative side, callers' comments are presented in abbreviated sound bite format, so what appears in print is rarely more than a brief "sounding off." This contrasts with the more carefully developed reasoning of a letter (Reinken, 1994).

Conclusion

There is potential for call-in comment lines to be important extensions of the public conversation and the results of this study suggest that they are worth pursuing as one of the experiments Anderson argues are needed to "encourage and provoke participation" in news production and, hence, the creation of reality. The popularity of one newspaper's "Sound Off" column and the evidence found here of vigorous exchanges of opinion about public issues suggest that people are indeed interested in public affairs and will participate in public discussions if given the opportunity. People apparently are searching for a means to express themselves and have a hunger for unfiltered conversation and public debate (Viladas, 1992; Barone and Schrof, 1990). Providing opportunity might include eliminating the barriers of the traditional letters to the editor column. Letters require more time than a phone call and a certain level of writing ability, which can be intimidating to some who would otherwise contribute to public discussions. The anonymity of call-in comments appears to inspire participation as well.

The findings here also suggest, however, that newspaper editors ought to consider ways to improve the quality of the conversation generated by the call-in lines. If the purpose of public discourse is to allow a community of equals to "discover and validate what they can collectively consider true," as Clark (1990) suggests, then more than verbal spitballs of emotion, fired without the validating force of evidence, will be needed. A community cannot reach understandings without a vigorous give-and-take of information and persuasive rhetoric. Without understanding, a community cannot be sustained.

This study suggests that more research into call-in comment lines is needed and would yield important results because we would learn better how to use this popular format to further public dialogue. We need to learn more about the selection process that determines which comments get published as well as the characteristics of those who participate with comments and what benefits they receive from their participation.

Notes

[1] Only "Sound Off" columns appearing on the opinion page or on Page 2 were included in the study. "Sound Off" originally appeared as a regular feature on the opinion page, but moved to Page 2 in mid-September during the study period. The daily studied is the Mobile, Alabama, *Register* and *Sunday Press-Register*. It had a daily circulation of 64,674 (combined circulation with the afternoon *Press*, which carries the same "Sound Off" column was 93,272). Sunday circulation was 116,003 (*Editor and Publisher Yearbook 1994*). Occasionally, the paper runs a special "Sound Off" column on a different page in addition to the regular feature. This is used to accommodate an unusually large number of calls made in connection with a major news story. This occurred at least once during the study period when a special column was published to accommodate some of the calls concerning the murder of two young brothers in South Carolina after the paper carried a news story indicating that their mother, Susan Smith of Union, S.C., had confessed to the killings (Mobile Register after the paper carried a news story indicating that their mother, Susan Smith of Union, S.C., had confessed to the killings (Mobile Register, Nov. 6, 1994, 12A). These were not included in the study to avoid skewing the data. In addition, the paper also carried a "Sound Off" column on sports as a regular feature on the sports pages. These comments were not included in the data and therefore the data may be skewed in favor of non-sports subjects.

[2] Length was measured by counting all words of 3 letters or more. Focus was divided into "local" (city, county, or regional issues), "state," "national," "international," and "general." Comments were coded as national if they concerned U.S. foreign policy and actions in foreign countries. General was reserved for comments that were not tied to a particular geographical area. Subject matter was coded as "politics/government" (elections, government actions, policies, regulations, laws, or deliberations); "education" (elementary, secondary, or higher education issues, whether concerning public or private schools, colleges, and universities); "justice system/public safety" (crime, traffic control, trials, corrections, emergency response, legal deliberations); "health care" (preventative care, medical treatment, medical and/or hospital policies, health insurance providers); "media" (news judgment, performance of media, compliments or complaints about articles, editorials, or columns that ran in the paper or particular reporters or editors); "quality of life" (entertainment, arts, sports, community relations, race relations, parks and recreation facilities); "business/economy" (particular businesses or industries,

performance of the economy, jobs, interest rates); "religion/churches" (religious beliefs or practices, events sponsored by a church or churches); and "other" (any issues that did not fit within those coded for). Abortion was always coded as "politics/government" rather than "health care" because the discussion usually concerned governmental policies concerning the availability and legality of abortion.

Reciprocity involved whether or not the comment or letter overtly or by implication referred to a previous item in the paper. Coding was done for "news story," "event not covered in the paper," "editorial" (the institutional opinion of the newspaper published on the opinion page); "local columnist" (regular local columnists including editors of the paper who regularly write a column, guest columnists from the community); "syndicated columnist" (nonstaff-produced opinion columns syndicated to more than one newspaper); "'Sound Off' comment" (a previously published comment in the "Sound Off" column); "letter to the editor" (letter from reader published on the opinion page); "unclear" (a reference was being made but it is unclear to the coder what it is); "not applicable" (comment or letter did not refer to any previously published item); and "other" (refers to previously published item not coded for).

Character was coded as "oppositional" if the comment or letter was called-in or written to present an opposing view to a position that appeared in an item previously published; "supportive" if the comment or letter offered praise or support for the position taken in a previously published item; "neutral" if the comment or letter was not referencing a previously published item or it the comment or letter added opinion or fact that did not obviously oppose or support a previously published position.

Quality was coded as "opinion" if the comment or letter offered no facts that could be verified; "factual information" if the comment or letter offered verifiable information and no opinion; "both" if the comment or letter included both opinion and factual information; and "query" if the comment or letter simply asked a question (rhetorical questions were coded as opinions).

[3]Political party was coded as "Democrat" if the comment or letter specifically positioned the caller or writer as a member of the Democratic Party, or if the comment or letter specifically criticized a Republican office holder or candidate or members of that party or specifically supported a Democratic office holder or candidate or members of that party. It was coded "Republican" if it did just the opposite, declaring support for Republicans or criticizing Democrats. It was coded "Other" if it stated clear support for a political party other than Democratic or Republican. It was coded "Neither" if no specific political party was supported or criticized by the comment or letter, which may have been because the issue was not political in nature or because the caller or writer did not specifically indicate

political party support. For purposes of analysis, the "other" was added to the "neither" because only 1 "other" was coded.

Social philosophy was coded as "conservative" if the comment or letter overtly expressed support for a social policy that is usually considered politically conservative, such as opposition to welfare, support for limited government, support of "family values," support of free enterprise, opposition to abortion. It was coded "liberal" if the comment or letter overtly expressed support for a social policy that is usually considered politically liberal, such as support for an active government, support for abortion, support for welfare, support for an expansive civil rights policy, protection of the environment and worker rights. It was coded "neither" if a social philosophy was clearly being advocated, but it could not be considered conservative or liberal, such as support for strong and effective law enforcement. It was coded "unclear" if a social philosophy was obviously being advocated but it was unclear to the coder whether the philosophy was conservative, liberal, or some other. It was coded "not applicable" if the comment or letter did not discuss the issue being considered from an ideological viewpoint. For purposes of analysis, the "neither" and "unclear" were added together because of their similarity and because only 9 "neither" were coded.

[4] Whistle-blowing was coded in the positive if the comment or letter revealed information that appeared to be previously nonpublic information that someone or some entity was trying to keep secret. One whistle-blowing comment and 8 whistle-blowing letters were coded. Editor's note was coded positive if the newspaper published such a note immediately following the comment or letter. Only 4 editor's notes were coded. They all followed "Sound Off" comments.

[5] While it wasn't tested whether letter writers also called the call-in comment line, it seems it would have to be rare if not highly unlikely that all the letter writers on one day also would have call-in comments published on that day. But even if they did, that would still allow for another 8 individuals to be represented in the call-in column. Furthermore, on days such as Nov. 6, when additional "Sound Off" comments and letters to the editor were published on a separate page concerning a special issue, the number of additional voices brought into the public dialogue increased even further. On Nov. 6, the paper published 8 additional letters to the editor that were sent to the paper via electronic mail and 7 additional called in comments. All were published in a special, additional column on page 12A under the "Sound Off" logo. The subject was the confession of Susan Smith to the killing of her sons.

[6] A leading news writing text advises reporters to use direct quotes only "when someone says something unique," "when someone says something uniquely," or "when someone important says something important" (Brooks, Kennedy, Moen, and Ranly, 1992, 120). They are not to be used to convey information.

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Benefits and Problems of Introducing Computer-Assisted Reporting Courses: Opinions of an Expert Panel

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BENEFITS AND PROBLEMS OF INTRODUCING COMPUTER-ASSISTED REPORTING COURSES: OPINIONS OF AN EXPERT PANEL

Introduction

Joel J. Smith, investigative reporter for the Detroit News, used a computer to compare the Michigan Department of Corrections database of over one-half million convicted criminals with the state's education department database of 100,000 teachers and bus drivers. He discovered there were nearly 200 convicted felons in Michigan's classrooms and another 200 driving buses. The charges included murder and child molestation. The Department of Education admitted negligence in checking applicants' records, and the state quickly passed a statute requiring criminal checks on all teachers and drivers.[1]

There is little question that journalists with database computer skills, such as Smith, are in demand. Noting that reporters using computers for data retrieval and analysis have won Pulitzer Prizes the last six years in a row, *U.S. News and World Report* recently listed computer-assisted reporting (CAR) specialist for print media as one of 20 "hot job tracks" for the future:

> Journalists can improve the odds of breaking in and moving up by mastering computer-assisted reporting techniques.... Dozens of papers have trained or hired specialists in computer-assisted reporting in the last few years, and more will as the costs of equipment drop and databases become available through online services.[2]

In addition to prize-winning story projects and the hiring of specialists, fundamental CAR techniques are quickly becoming part of the standard repertoire in many of the nation's newspapers. Two-thirds of the 208 newspapers responding to a spring 1994 survey of dailies "use computers in some manner for some type of reporting."[3]

Referring to the rapid development of computer-assisted reporting in newsrooms, Dr. Jim Brown, director of the National Institute for Advanced Reporting, said, "Those in the job market now who don't know how to use a spreadsheet or a database are really at a competitive disadvantage ..."[4]

Computer-assisted reporting, or CAR, includes the use of computers by reporters for gathering and processing information in every phase of news story development: obtaining story ideas from computer databases, online services, networks and bulletin boards; collecting and analyzing information from government and private databases; verifying information received from human sources via online services and databases; and creating databases at the newspaper to statistically analyze information for stories and graphics.[5]

Despite advances in computer-assisted reporting being made by America's newsgatherers, most university journalism programs have yet to introduce their first CAR course. J.T. Johnson, professor of journalism, San Francisco State University, believes this disparity is a noteworthy problem:

> ... it appears a large majority of journalism students -- indeed, the great mass of all students in most universities -- are not being adequately prepared to cope with the information-retrieval and analysis environment that is used daily by government and business, and a steadily increasing number of print and broadcast companies. Our students, therefore, are being defrauded, bilked out of the skills vital to their intellectual and professional due.[6]

This article addresses questions associated with the introduction of CAR courses at universities. It first briefly outlines the use of computers in newsrooms and the development of the first CAR instruction programs. It then details the authors' Delphi study of CAR's future in journalism programs.

Computer Journalism

The use of computers by journalists is not new. Ward, Hansen, and McLeod identify the introduction of video display terminals (VDTs) and electronic pagination software as major technological changes in the newspaper industry beginning over two decades ago. The adoption of VDT technology changed writing, editing and production processes, while the electronic pagination systems transferred much of the back-shop production work to the journalists' desks.[7]

In addition to editing and pagination functions, newspapers are now regularly utilizing their computers to access online databases, search computerized public records, and scrutinize government documents. In 1983, John Ullmann reported that 20 of the 54 newspapers with circulations of 100,000-plus which he surveyed subscribed to one or more database services.[8]

Tim Miller, writer and consultant, studied the use of databases by journalists during his year as a research fellow at the Gannett Center for Media Studies. He found that the number of newspapers conducting online database searches quadrupled from 1982 to 1986.[9]

In a study of 96 randomly selected general circulation daily newspapers with circulations of more than 25,000, Frederic F. Endres found that 21 of the publications utilized commercial computer service networks, such as Nexis and Dow Jones, to access databases and BBSs by 1985.[10]

Endres, professor of journalism at Kent State University, discovered that most of the papers had been using database services for a year or less. Regarding the future of database use, 18 of 21 said they would either continue with the current subscription or add more. Respondents said the database services were used to gather story information in several areas: facts on individuals and corporations, details of political events (survey conducted during 1984 presidential campaign), sports statistics, weather data, business information, and background material on persons/companies/events [11]

In 1987, Hansen, Ward, and McLeod found that 38 percent of the newsroom staff members they surveyed at one metropolitan daily with a circulation of 385,000 used electronic database sources. The sample population consisted of the newspaper's 195 reporters, editors, columnists and editorial writers. One hundred thirty six, 69.5 percent, responded.[12]

In 1989, Jacobsen and Ullmann found that 71 percent of surveyed journalists said database searches were an "important" or "very important" component of their news reporting. Questionnaires were distributed to librarians at the 235 U.S. newspapers with circulations of 50,000 or more. The librarians were asked to pass along questionnaires to reporters or editors who used databases. Eighty responded. Seventy six percent said their searches were "almost always" useful. The perceived benefits listed by the respondents included improved detail, depth, and perspective for stories, as well as access to a wider geographic range of coverage and improved "memory" of facts.

The study indicated that potential problems related to database use were not a matter of great concern. The journalists responding generally were not worried about databases leading to homogenization of coverage, adversely effecting reporting angles, or contributing to a loss of local perspectives in reporting. Nor were they very concerned that database use would discourage original work or bury reporters in data.[13]

In 1991, Ward and Hansen found that 90 percent of the 105 newspapers with circulations of 100,000-plus they surveyed subscribed to at least one database service, with a median number of four taken. In 60 percent of the newsrooms equipped with PCs and modems, reporters searched public records electronically.

> The results of this study show that electronic technologies have been adopted in a large majority of the nation's biggest dailies. These technologies are used for information search, selection and analysis.... the use of the personal computer for "computer-assisted reporting" allows creation and analysis of information never previously available for news reports.[14]

In a July 1992 survey of daily newspaper managing editors, Brian S. Brooks and Tai-en Yang, University of Missouri, found that 90 percent of the large newspapers (100,000-plus) and 55 percent of the medium-size papers (50,000 to 100,000) had conducted investigative reporting using a computer. One hundred percent of the large and 52 percent of the medium papers had used newsroom computers to "access external databases." Forty-one percent of large newspapers had used computers to read nine-track tapes. The Nexis/Lexus database had been accessed "regularly" by 78 percent of the large papers, followed by DataTimes, 68, Vu/Text, 59, Dow Jones News, 41, and CompuServe, 39 [15]

Three-fifths of the newspapers responding to Garrison's 1994 survey of dailies used online services of some kind. Fifty-two percent used spreadsheet software for CAR, 48 percent relational database software, and 36 percent CD-ROM readers. Forty-seven percent had created, or planned to create, a "CAR desk" or CAR project team.[16]

These studies point to the fact that computer-assisted reporting is quickly becoming the norm for U.S. newspapers. Journalism schools have been slower to embrace these advances in newsgathering technology.

Following the introduction of VDTs and pagination software by newspapers, journalism programs gradually began creating their own computer laboratories to train future reporters and editors with that equipment. Many university newspapers and yearbooks, which provide publication experience for journalism majors, have made the transition from cut-and-paste production to electronic desktop publishing using PCs and pagination software. Most schools, however, have not taken the next step into the realm of online data access, spreadsheet analysis, and relational database programs. In 1984 the University of Oregon School of Journalism published the report of its comprehensive two-year study on "The Future of Journalism and Mass Communication Education." The researchers for "The Oregon Report," as it has become known, consulted an extensive list of journalists and educators for the study: most of the nation's schools/departments of journalism, 100 leading journalism educators, 40 leading scholars in other disciplines, heads of professional and industry organizations, and 50 experts on new communications technology.[17]

In a chapter titled "Coping With the New Technology," the authors explain that responses on the topic of future computer courses in journalism were mixed -- some favoring a more traditional emphasis on writing and editing skills, some favoring a dramatic step into the computer era, and others staking out a middle ground. Donald Shaw, professor of journalism at the University of North Carolina, argued in favor of keeping in step with the new technologies:

> Journalism programs likely will always trail industry in modern equipment. Yet programs must try not to allow too large a gap to develop. While the world of practical journalism expects students to know how to write and edit ... we must allow students to work with more modern equipment. This makes the jump from school to work smoother.[18]

Even with its effort to strike a balance between the extremes, the Oregon Report recommended the teaching of primary CAR skills of that era as an elementary function of future journalism school curricula: "Schools should especially give instruction in database use. A technology laboratory for computer-assisted instruction and other uses is proposed."[19]

One decade after the Oregon Report, Davenport and DeFleur found university journalism programs had made only minimal progress toward that goal. In their 1993 survey of 258 j-schools, they found only 30 percent offered instruction in online database searching and less than 25 percent instruction in analysis of government databases. However, all but one of the schools acknowledged the presence of student interest.[20]

The first journalism schools to move into the CAR arena include the University of Missouri, the University of Indiana-Indianapolis, Syracuse University, and Columbia University in New York City. Students, educators, and journalists seeking to acquire knowledge and develop skills in CAR have completed courses offered by Indiana's National Institute for Advanced Reporting (NIAR), Missouri's National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting (NICAR), Syracuse's Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC), and Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism. CAR workshops also have offered by the Poynter Institute for Media Studies, AEJMC, the American University in Washington, D.C., and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, home of CAR pioneer Philip Meyer.[21]

NIAR was founded by the University of Indiana's Dr. Jim Brown and Scripps Howard News Service's Andrew Schneider in 1989. They began offering CAR courses in the format of an "intensive" 2-1/2 day institute. The instruction covered accessing and analyzing computer tapes, building your own databases, and hands-on experience in a computer lab. More than 600 persons had completed the short course by the fall of 1993. NIAR, which boasts of being the first CAR program, now hosts a large annual CAR conference.[22]

Shortly after the creation of NIAR, veteran CAR journalist Elliot Jaspin founded the Missouri Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting (MICAR) and began offering database training for journalists. Focusing specifically on the use of nine-track reel tapes for investigative reporting, MICAR's week-long seminar titled Training Reporters In Data Acquisition & Retrieval Technologies (TRI/DART) was offered several times a year. Similar to NIAR institutes, promotional brochures for TRI/DART warned participants "Because the course is very intensive, participants should be highly motivated."[23]

With a modest grant from the Freedom Forum, MICAR became NICAR in 1994 and underwent a "focus change," according to managing director Brant Houston.[24] NICAR now offers broader training in three major areas during its week-long "bootcamps" for journalists and educators: spreadsheets, database managers, and online resources.

NICAR's bootcamp participants are given instruction in converting tape records into a usable form for personal computers; detecting whether information has been tampered with; transferring the results of database analysis into other programs for further work; and obtaining electronic records -- including strategies for negotiating with government agencies.[25]

Syracuse's TRAC serves a dual function for journalists: offering courses in CAR, and maintaining an extensive, user-friendly database of Nuclear Regulatory Commission statistics (available on disk for PC, or nine-track tape). David Burnham, former reporter for *The New York Times*, and Susan Long, professor of quantitative methods at the university, oversee TRAC. Workshops covering the use of NRC data as the basis for investigative reports are offered periodically.[26]

Columbia University offers a beginning CAR course in the fall and an advanced course in the spring. The introductory course begins with the basics. "We assume you know how to put a disk in the machine and that's about it," Columbia's Steve Ross said. Teaching students the rudiments of CAR using spreadsheet software, Ross argues that computer-assisted reporting is more practical for the everyday story than the occasional Pulitzer-caliber effort: "Indeed, it is the routine story, done better, that serves readers and listeners better than the occasional blockbuster -- and it makes all of journalism more fun for its practitioners."[27]

In addition to journalism students, New York-area reporters often take courses at Columbia. Ross offers them free tuition on a space-available basis and a free copy of a loose-leaf collection of detailed CAR exercises -- the first CAR textbook -- which he authored and published.[28] Columbia also offers summer seminars and on-site sessions for newspapers.[29]

Research Questions

Aside from the schools noted above and a handful of other exceptions, the development of CAR programs in journalism schools has not kept pace with their establishment in newsrooms. However, if universities continue the pattern they established following the introduction of VDTs and pagination systems, then CAR courses eventually will be introduced in journalism schools. Discussions concerning the future of CAR courses, therefore, should focus on

"When?" and "How?" rather than "If?" This study has taken that approach.

A panel of educators and journalists with experience in CAR addressed the following questions in this study: What benefits will journalism schools realize from the introduction of computer-assisted reporting courses? What problems will the schools encounter in the process? How might those problems best be addressed?

Methodology

The Delphi method was used to seek consensus among a panel of CAR experts regarding the benefits, problems, and problem solutions associated with introduction of computer-assisted reporting courses in journalism schools.

The Delphi is a research methodology designed to solicit expert opinions regarding the predicted future of a particular domain. This research technique was developed and refined during the 1950s and 1960s by the Rand Corporation to help the United States military develop long-range strategies. Since that time Delphi has been used widely in business, science and government.[30]

Delphi research is a progressive, multi-step process: development of the Delphi question, selection of the panel of experts, creation and distribution of the questionnaires, analysis of the results, and preparation of a final report.[31] The Delphi study "usually involves iterative questionnaires administered to individual experts in a manner protecting the anonymity of their responses."[32] The Delphi method, a type of futures research, "seeks to avoid the psychological pitfalls of face-to-face discussions among the experts by employing sequential interrogations in which respondents, at each stage, are provided with a feedback of the panel's distribution of opinions obtained at the previous stage of inquiry."[33]

A primary strength of the Delphi approach is anonymity of the expert panelists. Each respondent in this study was free to offer his or her opinions without the persuasive influence of a face-to-face peer environment. The leverage of dominant personalities and the sway of majority attitudes were avoided. Furthermore, in the second and third rounds of questionnaires, predicted benefits and problems were presented without the names of the experts who generated them. In these rounds, therefore, peer ideas were evaluated solely for their intrinsic value. Conversely, a fundamental weakness of the Delphi is the lack of opportunity for panelists to question one another directly or seek clarification for statements previously made.

The Research

This Delphi study utilized a non-random sample of expert subjects. The panelists were selected based on their depth and span of experience with CAR as professional journalists or as university journalism instructors. Nominations were collected from personal interviews, articles in scholarly and trade publications, professional and academic credentials, and participation in CAR seminars and conferences. Some respondents have primarily professional experience with CAR, some primarily academic, and some a blend of the two.

Panelists included professional journalists working for numerous newspapers, a wire service, a newspaper conglomerate, a national news magazine, and a broadcast network news program. Some are Pulitzer-Prize winners or finalists. Several of the respondents hold newly created CAR positions with titles such as "database reporter," "systems analyst," "computer specialist," and "new media manager."

The panel of experts also included faculty members in higher education journalism programs at institutions ranging in size from large state universities to small colleges. Other participants included the directors of two independent CAR institutes, and library directors for a large journalism school and a national media institute. Three rounds of questionnaires distributed in the fall of 1994 served as the research instruments for the Delphi. The first and third rounds consisted of open-ended questions designed to foster a free flow of opinions from the panelists. The second round asked respondents to rate and rank a series of statements based on Round I responses.

Round I asked panelists to list up to five benefits and up to five problems associated with the introduction of computer-assisted reporting courses in university journalism programs. In Round II, experts rated the likelihood of problem statements generated in the first round on a five-point semantic differential scale ranging from "unlikely" to "likely." They also ranked the top five problem statements according to magnitude. Round III asked panelists to suggest possible solutions to the top five rated and ranked problem statements from Round II.

Results

From a master list of 53 potential respondents, 33 journalists and journalism educators completed a reply form agreeing to participate in the Delphi study of computer-assisted reporting. Each of the 33 was sent a Round I questionnaire. Thirty returned completed questionnaires, yielding a return rate of 91percent.

One university professor returned an unanswered copy of the questionnaire and asked to be dropped from the study. He said he had "not kept up with" computer-assisted reporting enough to knowledgeably answer the questions. One journalist returned the questionnaire too late to be included in subsequent rounds. Two persons did not return Round I questionnaires or respond to follow-up phone calls, facsimile letters or e-mail messages.

All 29 of the remaining panelists completed the Round II questionnaire, a 100 percent return rate. All 29 also completed Round III, a 100 percent return rate.

Potential Benefits

In Round I respondents listed 123 potential benefits. Similar answers were consolidated into 35 benefit statements, which fell into four broad categories: student-related, graduate-related, faculty-related, and journalism program-related.

The Delphi respondents foresee a plethora of benefits for students in CAR programs. According to the panel, students will acquire knowledge vital to their future jobs and beneficial in other university courses; develop statistical, analytical, and computer-reporting proficiencies; enjoy an improved learning environment; and have a broader perspective of available news sources.

Additional predicted student-related benefits include an increased emphasis on journalistic inquiry and on facts rather than personalities; increased access to diverse viewpoints; development of connections with news professionals; heightened awareness of First Amendment and privacy issues; and realization of the importance of access to public records. According to the panel, graduates of CAR-enhanced journalism programs will also reap a harvest of benefits, including an easier time securing journalism jobs; an easier transition to other computer-related jobs; an understanding of computer capabilities beyond word processing; and a clearer perspective of the contemporary world of computer communication. The respondents also listed graduate-related benefits that will profit others. These include an ability to use CAR for investigative reporting to inform the public; an ability to use CAR methods to generate story ideas for print and broadcast news organizations; and an opportunity to introduce CAR to news operations that have not used it.

Panelists also foresee university journalism professors as re-energized beneficiaries of CAR-enhanced programs. Faculty-related benefits include the motivation to stay current with developments in the profession; the development of more common ground between profession-oriented and research-oriented faculty members; the ability to utilize CAR databases for academic research; and the development of new connections with colleagues in other departments/programs.

Looking at the bigger picture, the respondents noted several benefits journalism programs will enjoy. These include an overall increased attractiveness to better professors and students; increased attractiveness to computer-oriented students, older non-traditional students, and mid-career professionals seeking CAR training; development of new connections with news professionals; and procurement of funding from organizations supporting CAR.

Journalism school benefits also will include the opportunity for programs to become more contemporary; an increased chance of "survival" in the university; the opportunity to use CAR as a marketing/PR tool; and a better reputation among faculty in other disciplines.

Potential Problems

The panelists listed 108 potential problems in Round I. Similar answers were consolidated, and a master list of 26 problem statements was developed for use in Round II. These were grouped into five broad categories. Some problems were included in more than one group:

1) Equipment-related problems included "cost of equipment," "maintenance of equipment," "class sizes limited because of equipment costs," "offering online services to large numbers simultaneously," "lack of standard computer hardware," "lack of standard computer software," "computer hardware becoming obsolete quickly," "computer software becoming obsolete quickly," "CAR techniques becoming obsolete quickly," and "the quality of retrieved data not being assessed."

2) Institution-related problems included "resistance of university administrators," "curriculum revision necessary for CAR courses," "resistance of faculty," "lack of qualified faculty," "faculty who misunderstand economic importance of CAR," and "for purposes of promotion and tenure, faculty will devote time to research rather than learning new CAR skills for teaching."

3) Curriculum-related problems included "CAR taught as a replacement for, not complement to, traditional reporting," "CAR skills segregated in separate courses rather than taught across the journalism curriculum," "curriculum revision necessary," "scarcity of CAR teaching materials," "developing substantive student assignments," "developing new courses in statistical analysis," " the limited number of student internships," and "the quality of retrieved data not being assessed."

4) Student-related problems included "students who are apathetic about CAR," "students intimidated by computers," "meeting expectations of incoming students who have been exposed to new technology in high school and home," and "the limited number of student internships." The first three deal with student attitudes, the fourth with opportunities for students.

5) Cost-related problems included "cost of equipment," "class sizes limited because of equipment costs," and "cost of online time."

Problem Likelihood and Magnitude

For Round II the 29 panelists were asked to rate each of the 26 problem statements, generated from Round I, by means of a semantic differential scale. The respondents checked one of five blanks between the bipolar adjectives "unlikely" and "likely" for each statement. All 29 participants rated the problems statements. The blank closest to "likely" was scored a five, the next closest four, the center blank three, the next closest two, and the blank closest to "unlikely" one.

Table I lists the problem statements in descending order from "likely" (5.0) to "unlikely" (1.0) based on their overall rating by respondents in Round II. When the means of two problem statement ratings are the same, the statement with the lower standard deviation is listed first.

In Round II, the panelists were also asked to rank "the top five biggest problems you believe university journalism programs will encounter during the process of introducing computer-assisted reporting courses." The respondents were asked to write "1" in the left hand margin of the list next to the biggest problem, "2" next to the second biggest problem, "3" next to the third, etc. All 29 respondents ranked the problem statements.

Table II lists the problem statements in descending order based on their overall ranking by respondents in Round II. First-place rankings were scored with five points, second-place with four, third with three, etc. When the point totals of two or more problem statements are the same, the statement with the greatest Number of high rankings (# of 1st places or next highest) is listed first.

According to the Table II scale ratings, the most likely problems university journalism programs will encounter in the process of introducing CAR courses are cost of equipment, lack of qualified faculty, maintenance of equipment, class sizes limited because of equipment costs, and curriculum revision necessary for CAR courses.

According to the rankings, the problems of greatest magnitude university journalism programs will encounter are cost of equipment, lack of qualified faculty, maintenance of equipment, resistance of faculty, and resistance of university administrators.

Table III lists the top five most "likely" problems from the Round II bipolar scale ratings with the top five "biggest" problems from the Round II rankings. Interestingly, "cost of equipment," "lack of qualified faculty," and "maintenance of equipment," in that order, topped both lists.

Table IV lists the five problem categories in alphabetical order followed by their mean likelihood and magnitude scores. Overall, cost-related and institution-related were rated first and second both as most likely to occur and as having the greatest problem magnitude.

Solutions

In Round III, panelists were asked to suggest possible solutions to the top five problems in likelihood and the top five problems in magnitude from the Round II rating and ranking data. Because the top three in both lists were the same, a list of seven problem statements emerged for use in the last round. Many of the panelists listed more than one solution for some of the problems. Each solution was considered separately when developing a master list.

Respondents generated eight separate solutions to the problem "cost of equipment, computer software and hardware." The solution most frequently listed was to seek financial donations from corporations and/or foundations. The next most frequent suggestion was to purchase used/inexpensive equipment, peripherals and software. Other solutions included leasing equipment, sharing equipment within the university, using student-owned equipment, and charging students an equipment fee.

Panelists offered eight distinct solutions to the problem "lack of qualified faculty to teach CAR courses." The solution most often cited was training existing journalism faculty in CAR techniques. Training suggestions included sending faculty to CAR institutes/seminars and bringing in news professionals for training programs. The second most popular solution was hiring knowledgeable adjuncts -- particularly CAR-savvy journalists from print and broadcast operations in the vicinity of the university. Additional suggestions included hiring full-time faculty with CAR expertise, raising salaries to attract those persons, borrowing instructors from other university departments, and replacing journalism school faculty unwilling to learn CAR. Regarding the problem "maintenance of equipment, hardware and software," panelists suggested eight different solutions. Several said full-time or part-time persons should be hired to service the hardware/software -- the top answer. Others suggested students and/or faculty could be trained to maintain equipment. Three said replacement equipment should be budgeted for. One respondent said the university's computer center could assist. However, another warned that journalism programs "cannot wait for the Computer Center folks to provide support ... must look after its own survival." Seven respondents said equipment maintenance would not be a substantial problem. Ten solutions were suggested for the problem of "class sizes limited because of equipment costs." The most frequent answer was dividing larger CAR classes into smaller groups for lab work. Several suggested scheduling additional sections of CAR courses. Two respondents suggested linking existing lab computers together via local area network (LAN) then loading the file server with CAR software. Other suggestions included sharing computer labs with other departments, using teaching assistants to help with lab sessions, and designing intensive CAR short courses in contrast to semester-long ones. Six panelists said "class sizes limited because of equipment costs" would not be a substantial problem.

The nine solutions for the problem of "curriculum revision necessary} for CAR courses" were offered in two realms. Additionally, six said curriculum revision would not be a substantial problem.

Regarding types of curriculum changes they would like to see, several panelists advised integrating CAR into existing journalism courses. Another group suggested adding CAR courses to the existing journalism school curricula. Three respondents said programs should do both: integrate CAR into a number of existing courses as well as offer a "standalone" class. Other solutions were consulting professional/academic CAR experts regarding curriculum revision, changing curriculum to focus on small-group learning, and changing curriculum to focus on CAR methods rather than specific software.

Regarding how to implement a curriculum change, respondents suggested persuading "those in charge" that CAR is a necessity, promoting CAR as "cutting edge" journalism, and waiting for revision to occur as a natural by-product of successful CAR courses.

Ten different solutions were offered for the problem "resistance of faculty." The suggestion offered most frequently was to replace faculty who have no interest in CAR. Several said to demonstrate the usefulness of CAR (in job market, computer communications, etc.) to faculty. Others said bring in journalism professionals/educators for CAR presentations. One suggested circulating CAR-produced or CAR-related articles. Other solutions included devising a reward system for faculty CAR training, and emphasizing the public relations opportunities afforded by CAR programs. Two panelists said faculty resistance would not be a substantial problem.

Respondents suggested 11 different solutions for the problem "resistance of university administrators." The most popular solution was demonstrate to administrators the usefulness of CAR, particularly in the contemporary job market. Panelists also suggested hosting presentations by news professionals/educators with CAR expertise. Several suggested gathering support for CAR from other groups: regents/trustees, faculty, computer systems administrators and students. One said, if all else fails, move to another university. Five panelists said resistance from administrators would not be a substantial problem.

Discussion

The Delphi panel's top three problems in likelihood and magnitude correspond very closely to the top problems identified by DeFleur and Davenport's recent survey of journalism schools. "Cost of equipment," "lack of qualified faculty" and "maintenance of equipment," will be the key problems confronting schools introducing CAR, according to this study's panel. "Lack of budget," "lack of equipment," and "lack of instructors" were the top three reasons given to explain why online searching and database analysis were not being taught, according to the 1993 survey.[34]

The use of computer-assisted reporting techniques is clearly an example of adoption of innovations, as DeFleur and Davenport pointed out. They concluded that university journalism programs in 1993 were noticeably "lagging" behind newspapers in their adoption of CAR.[35] The panel of experts in this study agreed. However, they believe the gap between industry practice and university instruction should be closed. The problems associated with the introduction of CAR courses can be clearly identified and forthrightly addressed.

For five of the top seven problems of likelihood and magnitude, a handful of respondents said the problem was "not insurmountable" -- a popular descriptor.

Follow-on research would help identify ways schools and departments of journalism have surmounted the problems of introducing computer-assisted reporting into their programs.

A survey of journalism educators could identify how they have (or have not) solved the problems of introducing CAR courses into their programs. Case studies of successful implementation of CAR courses, sharing of syllabi, sharing of teaching techniques, learning experiences and methods of student evaluation are important areas for research. Sharing of information on how to bring faculty up to speed also would be invaluable.

For those schools unable to add CAR courses to their programs, it would be useful to share ways of meeting the requirement without adding a formal course. Perhaps some schools have found ways of using campus computer center expertise, courses and facilities, as well as library information retrieval processes.

Turning to the journalism profession, study of the actual skills and techniques used by CAR practitioners would be invaluable to share with other journalists as well as with students and educators. In such a rapidly changing field, a close, continuous and two-way dialogue between educators and practicing journalists is vital.

University journalism schools have been criticized in the past for their laggard status with respect to the world of professional journalists. Several panelists in this study repeated that refrain. Little by little, school programs have changed to keep pace with the contemporary reality of news reporting. Recently, however, the pact of change has accelerated. If journalism schools are serious about educating and preparing future news professionals, then the implementation of CAR is essential.

What sort of benefits should CAR-enhanced journalism programs look forward to? First and foremost, better prepared and highly marketable graduates -- computer-smart reporters in an age of online information. Plus, journalism schools will enjoy an influx of energy and enthusiasm as well: a new generation of inquisitive students, new associations with working journalists, a plethora of avenues for funding and research, enhanced reputations, and plenty of public relations opportunities.

Aspiring journalists should be able to acquire the knowledge and training in CAR they need at the university level. Repeating a common theme of the panel, one respondent said CAR is "essential to modern journalism." University journalist schools that forge ahead with CAR programs will reap a harvest of benefits, the experts predict. Those journalism programs that postpone entrance into the computer age could find themselves circumvented in the process of training tomorrow's professionals. Future journalists seeking training -- and news operations seeking qualified reporters -- may simply look elsewhere.

# # #

TABLE I

LIKELIHOOD RATINGS OF PREDICTED PROBLEMS FOR UNIVERSITY JOURNALISM PROGRAMS INTRODUCING COMPUTER-ASSISTED REPORTING COURSES

N = 29

Problem	Mean	SD
Cost of equipment	4.138	1.145
Lack of qualified faculty	4.0	1.225
Maintenance of equipment	3.862	1.167
Class sizes limited because of equipment costs	3.586	1.350
Curriculum revision	3.586	1.427
CAR skills segregated in separate courses rather than taught across the journalism curriculum	3.483	1.353
Computer hardware becoming obsolete quickly	3.310	1.491
Resistance of university administrators	3.241	1.431
For purposes of promotion and tenure, faculty will devote time to research rather than learning new CAR skills for teaching	3.207	1.256
Students apathetic about CAR	3.138	1.457
Scarcity of CAR teaching materials	3.069	1.361
Faculty who misunderstand economic importance of CAR	3.034	1.017
Offering online services simultaneously to many students	3.034	1.426
The quality of retrieved data not being assessed	2.966	1.163
Resistance of faculty	2.966	1.322
Computer software becoming obsolete quickly	2.931	1.438

Developing new courses in statistical analysis for journalism students	2.896	1.291
Cost of online time	2.862	1.356
Lack of standard computer hardware	2.862	1.633
Lack of standard computer software	2.793	1.449
Limited number of student internships available in CAR-equipped newsrooms	2.759	1.544
CAR taught as replacement for, not complement to, traditional reporting	2.621	1.347
Students intimidated by computers	2.621	1.449
Meeting expectations of incoming students exposed to new technology in high school and home	2.586	1.211
CAR techniques becoming obsolete quickly	2.103	1.263
Developing substantive student assignments	2.069	1.113

TABLE II
MAGNITUDE RANKINGS OF PROBLEMS UNIVERSITY JOURNALISM PROGRAMS WILL ENCOUNTER DURING THE PROCESS OF INTRODUCING COMPUTER-ASSISTED REPORTING COURSES
N = 29

Problem	Points	#1 Rankings
Cost of equipment	97	11
Lack of qualified faculty	67	9
Maintenance of equipment	30	
Resistance of faculty	27	3
Resistance of university administrators	27	1
Class sizes limited because of equipment costs	26	
Students apathetic about CAR	18	1
Cost of online time	15	
CAR skills segregated in separate courses rather than taught across the journalism curriculum	15	
Students intimidated by computers	14	
Curriculum revision necessary for CAR courses	14	
CAR taught as a replacement for, not complement to, traditional reporting	11	1
Scarcity of CAR teaching materials	10	
For purposes of promotion and tenure, faculty will devote time to research rather than learning new CAR skills for teaching	8	
Computer hardware becoming obsolete quickly	8	

CAR techniques becoming obsolete quickly	7	1
The quality of retrieved data not being assessed	6	1
Lack of standard computer hardware	5	
Lack of standard computer software	5	1
Developing substantive student assignments	5	
Limited number of student internships available in CAR-equipped newsrooms	5	
Offering online computer services simultaneously to many students	3	
Computer software becoming obsolete quickly	3	
Faculty who misunderstand economic importance of CAR	2	
Meeting expectations of incoming students exposed to new technology in high school and home	2	
Developing new courses in statistical analysis for journalism students	1	

TABLE III
TOP FIVE PROBLEMS BY LIKELIHOOD SCALE RATING AND TOP FIVE PROBLEMS BY MAGNITUDE RANKING
N = 29

Problem	Scale Pts.	Ranking Pts.
Cost of equipment	120 (#1)	97 (#1)
Lack of qualified faculty	116 (#2)	67 (#2)
Maintenance of equipment,	112 (#3)	30 (#3)
Class sizes limited because of equipment costs	104 (#4)tie	26 (#6)
Curriculum revision necessary for CAR	104 (#4)tie	14 (#11)
Resistance of faculty	86 (#14)	27 (#4)tie
Resistance of university administrators	94 (#8)	27 (#4)tie

TABLE IV
PROBLEM LIKELIHOOD AND MAGNITUDE SCORES FOR THE FIVE CATEGORIES OF PROBLEM STATEMENTS
N = 29

Problem Category	Likelihood Mean Rating Pts.	Magnitude Mean Ranking Pts.
Cost-Related	3.517	46.0
Curriculum-Related	2.953	8.4
Equipment-Related	3.165	19.0
Institution-Related	3.283	26.2
Student-Related	2.784	9.8

APPENDIX A

PANELISTS' BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

From a master list of 53 potential respondents, 33 journalists and journalism educators completed a reply form (see Appendix C) agreeing to participate in the study. Each of the 33 was sent a Round I questionnaire. Thirty returned completed questionnaires. John L. Griffith, professor in the College of Journalism and Communication at the University of Florida, returned an unanswered copy of the questionnaire and requested that he be dropped from the study. He said he had "not kept up with" computer-assisted reporting enough to knowledgeably answer the questions. Bill Dedman, director of the Associated Press' computer-assisted reporting program and 1989 Pulitzer Prize winner for an *Atlanta Journal* CAR story, was sent on a one-month overseas assignment shortly after Round I was mailed out. He returned his Round I questionnaire too late to be included in subsequent rounds.

Two respondents did not return questionnaires or respond to follow-up phone calls, facsimile letters or e-mail messages: Dr. Susan Long, co-director of the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC) at Syracuse University; and Richard Mullins, professor at the School of Journalism, University of Missouri, and founder of the National Library on Money & Politics.

The following 29 panelists participated in all three rounds. Respondents are listed in alphabetical order.

Len Ackland is an associate professor in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Colorado. He also serves as director for the institution's Center for Environmental Journalism. He teaches a CAR course titled "Precision Journalism." Ackland worked as a technology and business reporter for the *Chicago Tribune* for six years and as a reporter for the *Des Moines Register* for three years. He is co-editor of the 1986 book *Assessing the Nuclear Age*.

Adam Berliant is a database reporter for the *Morning News-Tribune* in Tacoma, Washington. He is co-founder of a computer-assisted reporting research service, Electronic Public Information Consultants, EPIC. Berliant worked at NICAR for 2 years with Elliot Jaspin.

Dr. Roger Bird is an assistant professor in the School of Journalism and Communication at Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada. He was trained in CAR at NICAR. Dr. James Brown is co-founder and executive director for the National Institute for Advanced Reporting (NIAR) which hosts annual CAR seminars. He is also associate dean at the University of Indiana-Indianapolis School of Journalism.

Lloyd Brown is editor of the editorial page for *The Florida Times-Union* in Jacksonville, Florida. He has worked as a reporter and editor for the *Jacksonville Journal* and *Times-Union* for over 35 years.

Dr. Wayne Danielson is a professor in the department of journalism at the University of Texas. He was director of UT's Project Quest, 1984-1987, promoting use of microcomputers in teaching and research. He has authored/edited over one dozen computer programs since the mid 1980s. Danielson has served as a reporter and editor for the San Jose Mercury-News and the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. He is the author of several books, including *Exercises* and *Tests for Journalists, Programmed Newspaper Style,* and *Programmed News Style*. Danielson is also the author of several dozen scholarly articles in *Journalism Quarterly, Public Opinion Quarterly, Perspectives in Computing*, etc.

Thomas Greer is vice president and senior editor for *The Plain Dealer* in Cleveland, Ohio. He has overseen a number of large-scale CAR projects, included one nominated for a Pulitzer Prize.

David Hinchman is associate producer for NBC's "Dateline," and has directed numerous CAR investigations for the news program. He served as assistant director for NICAR from 1989-1992. Hinchman co-founded EPIC -- a computer analysis service for journalists -- with Adam Berliant. He has won several reporting awards for investigative stories using CAR.

Brant Houston is managing director of the National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting (NICAR) and adjunct assistant professor of journalism at the University of Missouri School of Journalism. He worked for 17 years as an investigative reporter and editor for the *Kansas City Star* and the *Hartford Courant*. He developed the *Courant*'s CAR program and trained more than two dozen reporters.

Elliot Jaspin is director of computer-assisted reporting for Cox Newspapers in Washington, D.C. He is the founding director of MICAR. Jaspin won a Pulitzer Prize for his investigative reporting with the *Providence (R.I.) Journal-Bulletin* in 1988-89. With a grant from the Freedom Forum, he developed "Nine-Track Express," a CAR software for analyzing nine-track magnetic computer tapes used extensively by federal and state governments to store data.

Dr. J. T. "Tom" Johnson is a professor in the department of journalism at San Francisco State University. He has worked as an editor for *Scientific American*/W. H. Freeman and Company and as a reporter, stringer, and correspondent for the *New York Times*, United Press International, Time-Life News Service, *Popular Science* magazine and the *Topeka Capital-Journal*. He is the founding editor of *MacWEEK* and contributing editor to *InformationWEEK* magazines. Johnson is president of SARTOR Associates: Editorial and Telecommunication Consultants, supporting the use of personal computers in journalism and higher education.

George Landau is computer specialist for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. He founded the CAR program at the newspaper in 1989 after several years as a general assignment reporter. Landau was a finalist for the 1993 Pulitzer Prize for his investigative report of corruption in the office of Missouri Attorney General William Webster.

Penny Loeb is associate editor and director of the CAR program for *U.S. News & World Report*. She worked as part of an investigative reporting team for New York's *Newsday* for five years. Loeb is a recipient of a Scripps Howard Public Service Award and a Society of Professional Journalists Public Service Award for two CAR stories.

Dr. Diane Lynch is an assistant professor and chair in the department of journalism at St. Michael's College. She was trained in computer-assisted reporting at NICAR and conducts CAR seminars for faculty.

Shawn McIntosh is database editor for the *Dallas Morning News*. She has worked as a reporter for *USA Today* and is a member of the Society of Professional Journalists. McIntosh has written CAR articles for professional publications, such as *Quill*, and given CAR presentations at SPJ and NICAR conferences.

Dr. Philip Meyer is the Knight Professor in the School of Journalism, University of North Carolina. He is the author of *Precision Journalism: A Reporter's Guide to Social Science Research Methods* and *The New Precision Journalism* -- books which help "bridge the gap between social science and journalism." Meyer worked as a reporter and editor for the *Miami Herald* and Knight-Ridder's Washington bureau for over 20 years. In 1968 he won a Pulitzer Prize for pioneering CAR reporting at the *Detroit Free Press*.

Deborah Nelson is an investigative reporter for the *Chicago Sun-Times* and president of the IRE board of directors.

Elliot Parker is an associate professor in the department of journalism at Central Michigan University. He is curator of the Internet's Computer Assisted Research and Reporting List (CARR-L). He has worked for United Press International and several daily newspapers.

Nora Paul is director for the Poynter Institute Library. She is also a Poynter Associate, responsible for organizing seminars for news research. She served for 12 years as library director then information services editor for the *Miami Herald*. Paul has served as adjunct professor of communications at the University of Miami. She has written a number of articles on CAR and the Poynter booklet, *Computer-Assisted Research: A guide to tapping online information*, which is being used in some university courses. She writes a column on bulletin board services for the *Database Files* newsletter.

Greg Reeves is a special assignment reporter for *The Kansas City Star*. He conducted CAR research for the newspaper's 1991 Pulitzer Prize-winning series on the USDA and shared Sigma Delta Chi award for the same. He has worked for *The Star* since 1976.

Dr. Steven Sander Ross is an associate professor in the Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia University. He has taught numerous CAR courses and seminars for students, journalists, and faculty. Ross is the author of the only textbook devoted exclusively to CAR, *Exercises in Computer-Assisted Reporting*, 4th ed.

Barbara Semonche serves as director of the News Library for the School of Journalism at the University of North Carolina. She is the editor of the 1993 *News Media Libraries: A Management Handbook*, which includes several chapters and appendices of CAR information.

Jeff South is database editor for the *Austin American Statesman*. He has served as editor and reporter for newspapers in Texas, Arizona and Virginia.

John Ullmann is an assistant professor of journalism at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. He is the author of the 1995 *Investigative Reporting: Advanced Methods and Techniques*, which devotes a chapter to CAR. He filmed a 45-minute CAR training tape for the American Press Institute for broadcast to several hundred newspapers October 1994. Ullmann served as assistant managing editor for projects at the *Star Tribune* in Minneapolis from 1984-1990. Projects he directed won more than four dozen awards, including the 1990 Pulitzer for Investigative Reporting. He served as IRE's first executive director from 1978-1984.

Edward Valauskas is principal and founder of Internet Mechanics, a consulting firm for computing, telecommunications and network applications. He was named the 1991 Apple (Computer) Teaching Fellow and recently named an Apple Consulting Educator. Valauskas is a columnist for *DATABASE, Online, Library Journal*, and the Apple *Library Users Group Newsletter*. He is co-author of the recent *Internet Troubleshooter: Help for the Logged-On and Lost.*

Laura S. Washington is editor of *The Chicago Reporter*, which frequently uses CAR to research stories. She served as education reporter for the investigative monthly from 1980 to 1985. She was appointed deputy press secretary to Mayor Harold Washington in 1985. Washington is also a part-time correspondent for PBS's "Chicago Tonight." She is a board member of IRE, a member of the Chicago and National Associations of Black Journalists, and chair of the advisory board of the Chicago Media Workshop.

Mary Ann Chick Whiteside serves as new media manager for the Flint (Mich.) Journal. She has authored several articles on CAR for Editor & Publisher magazine.

Dr. Gale Wiley is an associate professor in the department of journalism at the University of Texas and director of the university's Clearinghouse for Computer-Based Education in Journalism. He has served as computer editor for *Journalism Quarterly*.

Dr. Fred Williams serves as director for the Center for Research on Communication Technology and Society, and holds the Mary Gibbs Jones Centennial Chair, in the College of Communication at the University of Texas. He is a Senior Research Fellow in the university's Business Research Unit. Williams has authored, co-authored or edited some 75 research articles and 43 books, including *Research Methods and the New Media*, and the 1993 *The People's Right to Know: Media, Democracy and The Information Highway*. From 1973 to 1985, he served as founding dean, then professor, for the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Southern California.

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Agenda Building and the 1992 Presidential Campaign:

Was it a failure to communicate or did the audience set the agenda?

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Agenda Building and the 1992 Presidential Campaign:

Was it a failure to communicate or did the audience set the agenda?

Abstract

Failure to Communicate examines the press releases distributed in October, 1992, by the public relations staffs of the two major party presidential candidates to determine whether these materials established issue salience for the voters. The study concludes that the the public did not engage in "media tropic" behavior, growing to the agenda of the campaigns. Instead, an active, empowered public played a pivotal role in issue ordering, helping to determine the outcome of the presidential election. The study posits that one reason for increased audience influence is the rise of marketed media. It also suggests that agenda building involves editor, marketing department, subsidizers, and audience in a complex, dynamic, and perhaps cyclical process.

As the time draws near for yet another Presidential election, campaign organizers are again searching for the "golden formula" to communicate effectively with voters.

Because political campaigns are, above all, exercises in communication, they require many vehicles to transmit issue and image salience to voters (Kingdom, 1966, p. 109; Walters, 1994). Mindful of this, the communications mix of a sophisticated campaign employs advertising and public relations techniques as part of an integrated political strategy.

An element of that mix is the press release. Properly used, releases have the potential to amplify themes and images stressed by the campaign. Some advocates believe that they can help stimulate media coverage to further advance those themes and images (Mitchell, 1992; Vermeer, 1982, p. 145; Gaby, 1980).

Political public relations practitioners believe, as do others in the field, that media placements of press release material bring legitimacy and attention to issues favorable to campaign and candidate. Legitimacy flows from the media, from the credence and presumption of impartiality the public attaches to "news."

Attention comes from the press' focus on a particular topic, the addition of the subject involved to the media agenda. Practitioners believe that this necessarily means the issue or entity is added to the public agenda which puts it in a position to shape public opinion (Turk, 1985, p. 12; Walters & Walters, 1992; Walters & Walters, 1994) and official action (Sigal, 1973, p. 135).

Believing in this power of the press, both 1992 presidential campaign staffs made a concerted effort to focus public attention on desired topics by distributing issue-oriented press releases to the media.

But, were the two campaigns successful?

This paper examines a census of those releases sent to electronic media outlets to determine whether they helped establish topic salience for the registered voting public.

In doing so, *Failure to Communicate* sheds light on the process of agenda creation and concludes that researchers should pay more attention to the role an audience plays in the process. Because of media evolution towards information as a commodity, this audience plays a larger role than previously thought of or accounted for.

The audience's selection of key issues in the campaign, in fact, may have been a pivotal factor in determining the outcome of the presidential election.

Previous Research

Public relations practitioners are not alone in their belief in the power of the media to set the public agenda. Since the McCombs and Shaw (1972) study of the 1968 U.S. presidential election, agenda setting research has tested the proposition that media emphasis on a topic results in public concern with this topic (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Shaw and McCombs, 1977; and see also agenda-setting festschrift in *Journalism Quarterly, 69*(4).

Many are executed by erecting and comparing rank measures of one set of agendas with similarly constructed rank measures of another. Such examinations are based on the assumption that the "media set the public agenda of issues by filtering and shaping reality rather than by simply reflecting it (Weaver & Elliott, 1985, p. 87).

Despite promising beginnings, the nearly quarter century of research that has followed the 1972 study has produced mixed results. One reason is that this theory usually cannot establish either causality or time order. Thus, while agenda setting posits that the media agenda influences the public's agenda, it is equally plausible that the public agenda influences the media agenda (Severin & Tankard, 1979).

Moreover, the agenda setting process does not always "work." This failure has been variously attributed to such factors as media usage, contingent conditions affecting the audience and the actors, and the level of obtrusiveness of the issues involved (Graber, 1984; Lang & Lang, 1981).

Whatever the case, this ambiguity has led to the search for constructs that either complement or supplant the theory. One steam of research has led scholars behind agenda setting to agenda building.

In what McCombs (1992) has called the "fourth phase" of agenda setting studies, researchers have been attempting to answer the question "Who sets the media's agenda."

This should have been among the first questions examined by researchers looking at issue selection by significant publics. The answer should reveal something about the relationship between audience interest in, and media attention to, issues. Preliminary indications are that this relationship appears to be more complex than that posited by agenda setting studies.

Gandy (1982) attempted to answer that question by examining the way in which the media interact with other, non-press, actors to create the items that eventually appear on the media agenda. According to Gandy, those actors include public information officers, govemmental and company spokes-persons and other professional public relations practitioners. They make up an integral component of the newsgathering process, since they are the initial source of much of what appears in the pages of newspapers and on the airwaves (Gandy, 1982; Walters & Walters, 1992; Walters, Walters, & Starr, 1994).

Because these sources have different philosophies, they raise different issues, focus on different aspects of a story and choose to promote certain perceptions. This means that source selection helps determine not only who will be given voice, but also what that voice will be allowed to say.

Certainly, the selection of

Table 1
1992 Voter Issue Agenda Stability
Spearman With Voters 8 October 1992 As Base

	Voters	Bush	Clinton
8 October	1.000	-0.018	0.552
6 January	0.917	-0.033	0.300
26 March	0.917	-0.033	0.300
2 September	0.817	0.417	0.750

Source: Base data gathered from The Gallup Poll

Using the 8 October rank order survey of Registered Voters as the benchmark this Spearman's listing demonstrates the stability of the Registered Voters' concern with the top ten issues of the campaign.

paper sources is as important to agenda building as the selection of people sources. And, Walters and Walters (1992), Walters and Walters, (1994), Walters, Walters, and Starr (1994), Altheide (1985), Hale (1978), Sachsman (1976), Kaid (1976), Rings (1971), and Glick (1966) all have provided evidence that suggest written publicity materials, such as press releases, provide a large part of news content.

Despite the importance of such documents in defining issues and creating images, few researchers have looked into the press releases of major national election campaigns. Research on public relations output within the context of a political contests has been limited, in part, because the press release has not been treated as important contributor to the process of building the political agenda. Much of the work that does look at such materials seriously is dated, tied to concepts such as "The Selling of the President" of the 1970s, or slanted to anecdotal considerations of subjects like "spin doctors." Quantitative research, such as it is, is uneven and has dealt mostly with local or state-wide elections.

Another reason that scholars may have neglected to examine releases is that they could not secure an adequate sample of the output of competing candidates.

The data set used in this study is different. Examined here are all the press releases issued by the major party candidates in the critical final month of the1992 presidential campaign. These materials provide an opportunity to assess complete articulated political agendas in a visible, vituperative, and public relations-dependent presidential campaign..

Failure to Communicate also accounts for audience preferences, as it attempts to explain the relationship of that group to the the agenda building process in an election campaign. The study does so through an examination of three factors: 1. the issues raised in the press releases disseminated by offices of the two major presidential candidates during October, 1992; 2. the issues identified as important to the voters and 3. the registered voter's candidate preference.

Research Questions

1. What issues do Bush-Quayle and Clinton-Gore campaign press releases identify?

2. What are the rank orders of the issues identified in the Bush-Quayle and Clinton-Gore campaign press releases? How do these ranks orders compare with each other and with those of surveyed registered voters.

3. What is the relationship between the percentages of registered voters who prefer a candidate and the issues identified in the press releases of the candidates?

Method

To answer these questions, three sets of data were examined. The first was composed of a census of original press releases from the Bush-Quayle and Clinton-Gore campaign offices. All distributed during the critical month of October, 1992, these releases were received by the top-ranked all-talk radio station in a large Texas metropolitan area.

These releases were scanned and formatted for use in Microsoft Word 4.0 using Omni-Page Professional. They were analyzed in Grammatik 4.0, a grammar-checking and analysis program designed for the office environment. Systat 3.0 was used to develop descriptive and inferential statistics.

The second set of data established the issues that were of interest to the voting public. The issues used for comparison of the agendas of the campaigns with those of registered voters were drawn from a Gallup Poll taken between October 8 and 9 1992. This sample included 775 registered voters. They listed job creation, economic growth, taxes, the federal budget deficit, crime, education, foreign policy, health care, and the environment as the top 10 issues of the election.

The third set of data determined the candidate preference of the voting public. Polling percentage preference data were drawn from two sources: a compendium of trial heats given in the November /December 1992 issue of *The American Enterprise* and The Gallup Poll Monthly for October and November 1992. When the results of more than one poll were listed for a given day, the polls were averaged and

Table 2
October 1992, Rank Order of Ten Campaign Issues

	Bush	Clinton	Voters
Budget	8	5	5
Crime	10	8	7
Character	2	7	8
Economy	3	2	1
Education	9	9	4
Environment	6	10	9
Foreign Affairs	5	6	10
Health	7	4	2
Jobs	4	3	3
Taxes	1	1	6

Sources: Gallup Poll and Press Release Word Counts

At the beginning of October 1992, Bill Clinton's Issue Agenda more closely matched that of surveyed registered voters than did that of then President George Bush.

that average was used as an expression of preference. This expression of preference provided the Percentage Who Preferred a Candidate on a Daily Basis.

To measure the difference between the major party candidates, two percentages were calculated. First, was the Daily Percentage Difference between the candidates, which was Clinton preference percentage minus the Bush preference percentage. Second, to eliminate the volatility of daily percentages, a Three-Day Rolling Average Percentage Difference between the candidates was calculated. This was the average of three days totals. The first percentage was the average of the last two days of September and the first day in October. The rolling average moved forward from this date.

For this study, personal qualities, including character, the draft, Iran, Iraq, and first and last names of the candidates, were also drawn from questions asked in the Gallup Poll and added to the basic ten issues. From this enlarged list, a dictionary of single key words for each issue was constructed. Then, a single key word dictionary was bounced by computer against the original press release.

The resulting figures were the count of word occurrences for each issue and a percentage of the total number of words in the original document. All issue categories were single word with the exception of the first and last names of the candidates. These were entered as George and Bush and Bill and Clinton. For ease of analysis, counts and percentages were computed, and collapsed into the categories Bush Total and Clinton Total.

Results

Running the dictionary file against the original press releases produced a rank order of issues for each campaign. This rank order was the same regardless of whether the numbers so generated were total word mentions or the percentage of total words in the releases. (See Table 2.) The Bush-Quayle releases ranked The Other Candidate's Name first, followed by (2) Taxes, (3) Candidate's Own Name, (4) Character, (5) Economy, (6) Jobs, (7) Foreign Affairs, (8) Environment, (9) Health, (10) Budget, (11) Education, and (12) Crime. The Clinton-Gore releases ranked The Other Candidate's Name first, followed by (2) Candidate's Own Name, (3) Taxes, (4) Economy, (5) Jobs, (6) Health, (7) Budget, (8) Foreign Affairs, (9) Character, (10) Crime, (11) Education, and (12) Environment. A Spearman's Rank Order Correlation between the issue agendas of the major party candidates during October of 1992 Presidential election campaign was .774.

To compare the candidates' agendas with that of the registered voting public, the top issues of the day were drawn from a Gallup Poll conducted between October 8 and 9 in 1992. Because The Other Candidate's Name and Candidate's Own Name did not appear in this poll, the two were deleted, and the remaining 10 categories were compared between the candidates and the registered voting public.

Looking at the election's top issues, critical differences between the campaigns and between the campaigns and the registered voting public emerge. (See Table 2.) While registered voters ranked the economy as the number one issue, Clinton campaign press releases rated it second, and Bush's rated it third. The voters rated health second, the Clinton camp rated health fourth, and Bush's rated it seventh. The voters rated jobs the third most important issue, Clinton's also rated it third, and Bush's rated it fourth. The voters rated education fourth, Clinton and Bush both rated it ninth. Finally, registered voters thought the budget was the fifth most important issue, Clinton rated also it fifth while Bush rated it eighth.

As might be drawn from this comparison, the issue agendas of the candidates differed from those of the registered voters.

Failure to Communicate

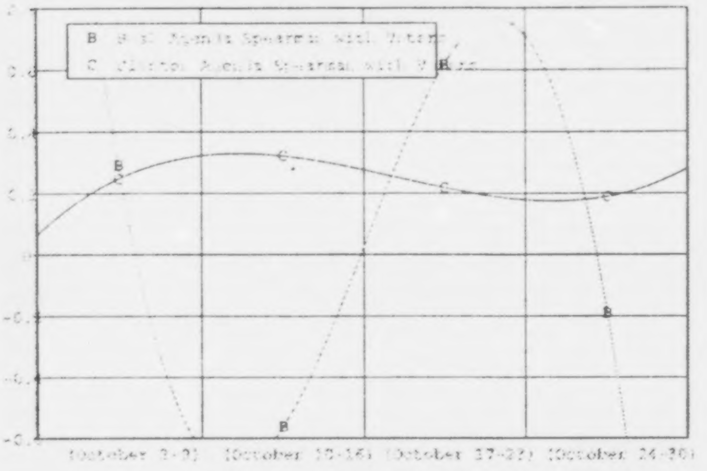
Using the ten issues, the Spearman's Correlation between the campaigns was .600. A Spearman's Rank Order Correlation run among Clinton, Bush, and the voters issue agendas shows that Clinton at .552 more closely matched that of the registered voters than did Bush at -0.018 when examined for all of October.

When Spearman's Rank Order Correlation was computed on a weekly basis, differences appear when the registered voters agenda (established by the October 8-9 poll) becomes a basis for analysis. For Bush, the correlations to the voter's agenda were: Week 1, .291; Week 2, -.562; Week 3, .616; and Week 4, -.190. So, for two of the four weeks, the Bush campaign agenda was negatively related to the voter's issue agenda. Only during the first and third weeks were Spearman's Rank Order Correlation positive.

For Clinton, the relationship was reversed. For Clinton, they were: Week 1, .247; Week 2, .321; Week 3, .218; and Week 4, .189. Thus, for all of the four weeks, the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation was positive. (See Figure 1.)

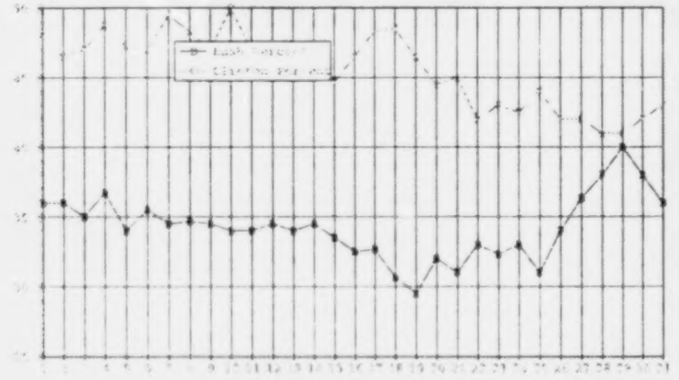
Bush began to close the percentage gap with Clinton after the third debate during the third full week of the month. This was a time period during which the Bush issue agenda more closely matched the Voter's agenda than did the Clinton agenda. On October 26, Bush gave a "James A. Baker Speech," indicating that Baker would become the domestic policy czar. For a while Bush gained ground, but then lost the impetus when his campaign turned to taxes and character as main issues on October 28, 29, and 30. During this period, Bush's chances slipped away as his campaign moved from the domestic issues dear to the hearts of registered voters, and Clinton stayed with those issues, talking mostly about jobs and the economy. (See Figure 2.)

Figure 1
October 1992 Weekly Candidate Spearman's Registered Voters Agenda as Base



Curve Fit Polynomial of degree (3), 25 Nodes, 6 digits

Figure 2
October 1992, Presidential Preference Percentages of Registered Voters



Sources Top, Word Counts and Gallup Poll **Above**, The Gallup Poll

As Figures 1 and 2 demonstrate, the more closely a 1992 Presidential Candidate matched the voter's issue agenda, the higher the percentage of registered voters favoring that candidate.

During these last days, the Spearman's Rank Order of Bush's agenda fell to .-190 relative to that of Registered Voters while Clinton's was .189. Bush lost the impetus of the Baker speech, began falling away, and then lost the election because his campaign did not pay attention to issues of concern to Registered Voters.

Besides using the key words in press releases to compare rank orders of issue agendas among the candidates and with the voters, these words may be correlated to indicators of preferences for an individual presi-

(Text continued on page 6.)

Table 3
October 1992, Bush Pearson Correlation Matrices, Percentages to Key Words

	Daily Percent Difference	Three-Day Rolling Average Difference	Percentage Who Prefer
Budget	.208	.048	.269
Character	.140	-.052	.460
Crime	.317	.168	.362
Economy	-.126	.526	-.231
Education	-.046	-.118	-.357
Environment	.087	-.046	.249
Foreign	.075	-.040	.171
Health	-.025	-.091	-.077
Jobs	-.027	-.117	.235
Taxes	.014	.305	-.251

Table 4
October 1992, Clinton Pearson Correlation Matrices, Percentages to Key Words

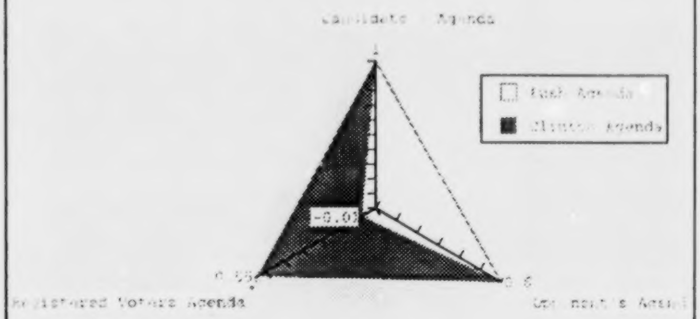
	Daily Percent Difference	Three-Day Rolling Average Difference	Percentage Who Prefer
Budget	.254	.248	.352
Character	.	.	.
Crime	.188	.073	.060
Economy	.343	.410	.532
Education	-.110	-.096	-.076
Environment	.	.	.
Foreign	.068	.139	.601
Health	.164	.083	.398
Jobs	.111	.271	.175
Taxes	.218	.282	.500

Sources: Means of registered voter preferences and key word counts from press releases.

Because the Bush and Registered Voter's Agenda differed so greatly, the Pearson Product Moment Correlations between the Percentage Who Prefer, the Daily Percent Difference, and the Three-Day Rolling Average Difference and the issues were low or negative. As outsiders, the Clinton camp campaigned as agents of change who were in touch with the people. The Clinton agenda was more closely identified with that of the registered voters.

(Text continued from Page 4.)

Figure 3
October 1992 Rank Order, Comparison of Both Campaigns



Sources: Issue rank orders constructed from polling data and from press release word counts

As this pictorial table demonstrates, startling differences between the issues agendas of the two campaigns, and between the two campaigns and registered voters emerged. Clinton won because his campaign more closely matched the issue agenda of the voters. Bush lost because his campaign did not. He failed tn his attempt to set the agenda for the voters

dential candidate. Such measures could include the Percentage Who Preferred a Candidate on a Daily Basis and the Daily Percentage Difference between the candidates. A Three-Day Rolling Average Percentage Difference between the candidate may be used to smooth out potential volatility in daily figures.

These figures add to an explanation of how the election was won and lost. Based on their understanding of the process, the Bush reelection camp had hoped to set an issue agenda for registered voters based on taxes, character flaws, the economy, jobs, and foreign affairs as its top five issues. Their attack campaign was wedded to these issues, even though, as the Spearman's Rank Order Correlations have shown, the registered voters agenda differed remarkably from the Bush camp. (See also Walters & Walters, 1994.)

Because the Bush and registered voter's agenda differed so greatly, the Pearson Product Moment Correlations between the Percentage Who Prefer, the Daily Percent Difference, and the Three-Day Rolling Average Difference and the Issues (as measured by key word process) were generally low. Relative to the Percentage Who Prefer, only one positive correlation was more than .40, one was more than .30 and three were greater than .20. These figures were worse for Daily Percent Difference (only one correlation greater than .20) and Three-Day Rolling Average (one greater than .50, one greater than .30; and one greater than .10)

Many correlations were negative, indicating that the more the Bush addressed an issue, the more likely registered voters were to turn away from him. Of the ten total correlations for Percentage Who Prefer, four were negative; for Daily Percent Difference, four were negative; and for Three-Day Rolling Average, six were negative. (See Tables 3 and 4, previous page.)

As outsiders, the Clinton camp campaigned as agents of change who were in touch with the people and who would not radicalize the government (See Walters & Walters, 1994.) Their agenda identified more closely with that of the registered voters. Compared to the Bush camp, the Clinton campaign had more positive and stronger correlations between campaign identified issues and Percentage Who Preferred a Candidate on a Daily Basis Daily, the Daily Percentage Difference between the candidates, and the Three-Daily Rolling Average Percentage Difference between the candidates. Several moved above the .60 mark, and, across the three categories, only three issues correlations were negative. This contrasts with the Bush campaign that 14 negative correlations. (See Tables 3 and 4.)

A Spearman's Rank Order Correlation matrix of the ordered correlations of issues for Percent Who Prefer, Daily Percent Difference, and Three-Day Rolling Average Difference and the candidate's agenda demonstrate visually startling differences between the two campaigns. (See Figure 3.) These figures also show the relative message consistency of the two campaigns over the course of October.

What emerges is the inability of Bush-Quayle to use press releases to redefine the issue agenda order for the registered voting public. Conversely, the Clinton-Gore enjoyed success by employing their releases to match its issue agenda order to that of registered voters. When Clinton-Gore stayed from this path, they lost potential voters.

When Daily Percent Difference, Rolling Difference, and Those Who Prefer were looked at as dependent variables that were product of important issues mentions, the agenda building process of this election becomes clearer. If the top five issues are looked at with respect to Multiple R-squared, the single instance in which a candidate's R^2 was larger than that for voter related issues was for Rolling Difference,

Table 5
Multiple Regression
Key Word Counts = Independent Measures
Daily Difference, Rolling Difference, and Percentage Who Prefer = Dependent Measures

	Daily Difference	Three Day Rolling Average Difference	Percentage Who Prefer
All Issues			
Bush	R^2 = .370, p. = .790	R^2 = .636, p. = .196	R^2 = .720, p. = .080
Clinton	R^2 = .410, p. =. 750	R^2 = .547, p. = .547	R^2 = .860, p. = .020
Candidate's Top Five Issues			
Bush	R^2 = .090, p. = .910	R^2 = .550, p. = .024	R^2 = .270, p. = .380
Clinton	R^2 = .160, p. = .840	R^2 = .280, p. = .700	R^2 = .660, p. = .020
Voter's Top Five Issues With Respect to:			
Bush	R^2 = .230, p. = .510	R^2 = .540, p. = .025	R^2 = .570, p. = .020
Clinton	R^2 = .280, p. = .500	R^2 = .310, p. = .310	R^2 = .710, p. = .010

Source: Percentages drawn from The Gallup Poll. Key word counts from press releases.

Clearly, the voter's issue agenda was the most important in the 1992 election campaign. The Bush campaign suffered because it failed to match the registered voter's agenda. See Tables 9 and 10 for Standardized Betas.

and those differences were only marginal. In that instance, Bush's top five had an R^2 of .55 and the Voter's had an R^2 of .54. The single instance in which a candidate's p. for top 5 issues was better than (that is, less than) that of the voter's agenda was also for Rolling Difference, which was .024 for Bush's top five issues and .026 for the Voters. (See Table 5.)

Even this small difference is deceptive if not examined in context. While the Candidate's R^2 for Bush were higher, three of his top five issues had negative standardized betas. These negative betas were -.612 for jobs and -.064 for both foreign affairs and taxes. For the voter's top five issues, these negative betas were -.666 for jobs and -.504 for education.

When the analysis included the ten campaign issues, the same patterns were still evident. Both R^2 and p. were higher for Clinton across Daily Difference and Percent Who Prefer, and lower with respect to Rolling Difference. In the Rolling Difference, Bush had an R^2 of .636 and p. of .196, and Clinton had an R^2 .514 and p. of .547, but, just as in the case of the top five issues, Bush had several negative betas. These included: -.751 for Job, -.560 for Environment, -.435 for Education, -.348 for Taxes, and -.041 for Foreign Affairs. Of these, Job and Education were third and fourth respectively on the Voter's Agenda. Clinton had three negative betas including -.752 for Foreign Affairs, -.544 for Education, and -.008 for Health. Of these, Health was second and Education was fifth on the Voter's Agenda. (See Tables 6 and 7. pages 8 and 9.

Likewise, Bush suffered from differences with respect Daily Difference, Rolling Difference, and Percentage Who Prefer across the Whole Agenda and the Candidate's and Voter's Top Five Agendas. These figures could be interpreted to indicate a number of things, including weakness of party regular support for Bush or enmity felt toward him as a Tory politician and/or support for Clinton as a outsider, in touch with the people who could concentrate on domestic issues. A look at standardized betas across all variables and levels of analysis supports this latter notion, as this was an election in which domestic issues were judged most important by the registered voters.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study looked at campaign press releases distributed by the staffs of the two major presidential candidates during

Table 6
Bush, Percentage Who Prefer = Dependent Measure
Agenda Items = Independent Measures

	Std.	T.	P(1 Tail)
Constant	0.00	42.33	0.00
Budget	0.64	2.21	0.03
Character	0.10	0.49	0.32
Crime	0.10	0.46	0.33
Economy	-0.44	-1.53	0.08
Education	-1.18	-2.88	0.01
Environment	-0.42	-1.36	0.10
Foreign Affairs	0.24	1.33	-0.11
Health	0.65	1.62	0.07
Jobs	0.36	1.37	0.10
Taxes	-0.03	0.49	0.32

$R^2 = .72$, p. =.08

Four of the ten of the Standardized Betas are negative in the equation that tests the relationship between the Percentage of Registered Voters Who Preferred then President Bush and Issue counts. Perhaps these indicate these voters did not believe what Bush had to say. This was particularly troublesome for the campaign with a key issue such as the economy.

October, 1992, to see 1) what issues the candidates' materials identified as important, 2) how the issue agendas constructed from the releases compared to each other and to that of the registered voters, and 3) the relationship between issues and the preference expressed by the voters for a candidate.

The results indicate that the Bush-Quayle and Clinton-Gore teams had differing views on the importance of issues on which to campaign. They also differed in the ability to manage that agenda.

Generally, the Bush-Quayle campaign used an issue agenda that was based on an offensive strategy. It concentrated on attacking Clinton's character flaws, including his moral lapses, his failures to reveal truthful information to the public and especially his attempts to evade the draft. The Republicans also lashed out at their opponents for their personal lack of expertise in foreign policy and their party's reputation for "tax and spend" legislation.

The Clinton-Gore campaign had a different strategy. As befits the outsiders trying to unseat a popular incumbent, the Democrats steered away from personal attacks, rarely mentioning concerns based on character. As befits self-professed "policy wonks," they focused on the issues. Those they chose had a domestic orientation. Their releases mentioned topics such as increasing employment, improving the economy and reforming the health care system. These materials pictured the challengers as agents of positive change, more in touch with the needs of the people than the Republican incumbents.

The results of this study indicate that the Clinton-Gore team was correct in its assessment; the Democrats, indeed, were closer to the public, at least in terms of topics mentioned in their campaign materials. Every measure used here shows that the issue agenda of Clinton-Gore was closer to the issue agenda of the public than was that of the Republican rivals.

This indicates that the Clinton-Gore campaign did not set an agenda for the voters. Rather, it matched the agenda of the voters. Doing so may have contributed to the Democrats' popularity. Through agenda matching, the Clinton-Gore team maintained a lead in the presidential preference polls, slipping only during the third week of the month. It was at this time that Bush-Quayle more closely mirrored the voters' concerns than did their opponents. When Clinton-Gore moved back into sync with the voters during the fourth week of October, they again began to pull away from the Republicans. They remained the leaders for the next few days, thus winning the election and delivering the Executive Branch of the government into the hands of the Democrats.

This study reveals as much about the agenda creation process as it does about successful campaign strategies. From the beginning, examinations of this process have suffered at least two major flaws. The first is the assumption of "media tropism" in determining time order. The second is that these studies usually

Table 7
Clinton, Percentage Who Prefer = Dependent Measure
Agenda Items = Independent Measures

	Std.	T.	P(1 Tail)
Constant	0.00	63.12	0.00
Budget	0.26	0.26	0.13
Character	Zero in Sample		
Crime	0.15	0/87	0.21
Economy	0.45	2.21	0.03
Education	-0.46	-2.37	0.02
Environment	Zero in Sample		
Foreign Affairs	0.19	0.60	0.28
Health	0.30	1.89	0.05
Jobs	0.28	1.46	0.09
Taxes	0.20	0.68	0.26

$R^2 = .88$, $p. = .02$

All except one of the Standardized Betas are positive in the equation that tests the relationship between the Percentage of Registered Voters Who Preferred Candidate Bill Clinton and Issue counts. Clinton seemingly owned economic issues, and , if the Constant may be interpreted as such, had a stronger base of hardcore supporters than did Bush.

do not account for the rise of "marketed media."

Early studies of agenda creation posited that the process is media tropic, that is, the audience grows to topics as delineated by the vehicles of mass communication. This process did not always "work;" numerous researchers found instances in which the public's agenda did not mirror that of the media. This was ascribed to a variety of factors, including media usage, obtrusiveness of the issues, or other contingent conditions. Usually, little or no regard was given to the audience as an active, economic force that helps determine media content. What we may have here may not be a failure to communicate, but a failure to acknowledge the true communicators, an active, empowered public.

This lack of recognition of the strength of audience control over issues is wedded to a public utility view of media. Founded on a notion that media leaders believe in, and practice, a broader notion of public good, such a view envisions the media benevolently assembling an agenda of issues for the consideration of the audience.

Even from the beginning of agenda building studies, such an assumption may never been entirely true. Although examples of crusty editorial types with a sense of the public good abound, successful media businesses have always depended on matching content to audience need. Those businesses that succeeded were able to more closely match the media product with the interests of a critical segment of the population.

Maximizing cost effectiveness reaching a target audience required that editorial "feel" be replaced with full-scale marketing departments. These departments know what the audience wants and match output to meet those needs. Audience are tested and probed through surveys, focus groups and audiences. And, as observers such as James D. Squires, former *Chicago Tribune* Editor, have noted, sharkskin-suited executives have taken over (Quoted in Soley, 1993). The new media moguls, who regard content as software for the media vehicle, are more likely to have MBAs than reporting experience.

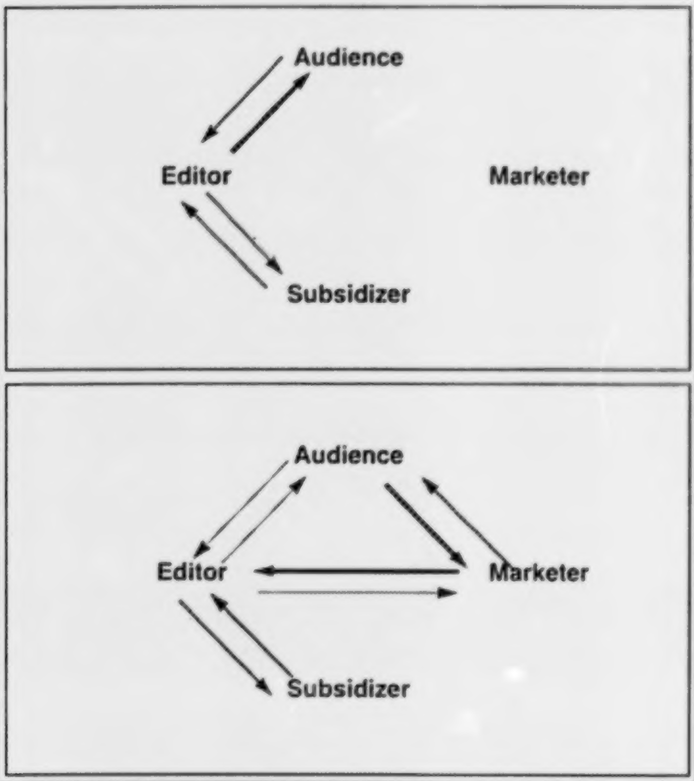
Now more than ever, managers tailor the media product to meet the needs of targeted groups. Today, this marketing of media is swift and profound. It means that audience and readers quickly help determine media content and issue ordering.

Programming formats such as talk and reality-based news and information are proof of this. And it seems that the process of making the audience more powerful in, and responsible for, agenda building is continuing unabated. Indeed, one Indiana Television station is even experimenting with letting an audience vote by telephone on the structure of the day's primary news cast.

While such extreme examples indicate that the audience has an more active role than ever before in this process, they are only the extension of a dynamic trend that has been developing for years.

Consider that one reason Ronald Reagan was regarded as the great communicator was that

Figure 4
Editorial Compared to Marketed Media Agenda Building



With the rise of marketed media, the audience assumes a large role in determining the issues discussed because of the necessity to preserve the economic viability of the media product. Editors, who once depended upon a quasi-statistical sense to gather data, are now informed by marketing departments. In turn, marketing departments have a more direct link with audiences, creating a process governed by economic need and audience feedback. (Thickness of rule includes relative strength of relationship.)

his public relations staff used a notion called "precincts of perception." Reagan's team attempted to change what the public felt about Reagan relative to an issue, instead of merely attempting to establish an issue order. In doing this, the public relations practitioners recognized, as do all good marketers, that bands of virtual publics linked not by proximity, but by interests and attitudes, define the marketplace.

The marketed public perspective not only recognizes that the agenda building process changes in harmony with the media business, it also changes in concert with society. Just as the concept of a homogeneous melting pot has given way to the view of a socially diverse salad bowl, and as the marketplace of ideas has become the menu of ideas, so too are there changes in the public and its power

Historical forces have brought the United States to a position that emphasizes diversity over conformity and subgroups over large populations. Clusters of smaller scale critical mass publics are assuming greater influence in defining content, and thus issue importance for the public relations practitioner and the media.

No doubt the power relationship involving publics, public relations practitioners and the media is a dynamic one. Whether such changes are linear (and permanent) or cyclical is unclear. But, some, including historian Arthur Schlesigner, Sr., have viewed these types of events in terms of great cycles.

Perhaps communications researchers would benefit by borrowing not just from mathematicians and statisticians, but from differing historical and philosophical perspectives as well.

Studying the problem will not be easy, because applying a cyclical concept to the agenda building process will require not only longitudinal study, but also a research perspective that views results in a different manner. This perspective values exploration, not exclusion. A failure to discover direct agenda building should not be discarded. Rather, it should be examined with respect to the influence of the public and the marketing process. Whatever the cause, failures, like successes, have value, particularly because agenda building involves a large number of actors.

If there is a failure in this particular study it is that all such actors were not included. It would have been useful to include media output, such as radio broadcasts or newscasts based on the press releases. However, the upcoming presidential election provides the opportunity to test an equation accounting for public, public relations practitioner and media all in one package.

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The Video News Release:
Public Relations and the Televison News Business

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Paper accepted for presentation in the Competitive Papers Panel, Public Relations Division of the AEJMC Conference, Washington, D.C., Aug. 9 - 12, 1995

Running Head: VNRs: A Coorientation

Abstract

This paper is derived from the first large-scale research project into the video news release (VNR), today's electronic hi-tech version of the traditional print press release.

Quantitative and qualitative methodologies were applied in collecting data from public relations professionals who produce and distribute VNRs and television news personnel who receive them.

Applying Chaffee and McCleod's coorientation model, it was found that both professions agree on several points concerning the preferred formats of VNRs, but there were significant differences on the product's place and usefulness.

Introduction

The press release is the single most popular, continuously used tool in public relations. In the early press-agentry model of public relations practice, press releases were often used to obtain free publicity to enhance the client's cause. In modern public relations, press releases are indispensable in disseminating an organization's messages to target audiences or publics. Several studies have concluded that news releases substantially influence the content of the news media even though not all news releases are published (Turk, 1986).

The video news release (VNR) is a high-tech electronic version of the press release. The VNR is a collection of pictures and words produced by public relations experts, and is delivered free of charge by satellite or cassette to networks and television stations. Their use of sound and video and their low-cost nature give them special power and influence, and turned VNRs into an integral part of public relations practice overnight.

The advent of new media technologies has had a tremendous impact on society, the way business is done, and individual lives. As is often the case with new technologies, the VNR has advanced faster than the practices and procedures which guide their use. The VNR deeply affects television news programming, including information collecting, news content and the believability of television news programs. But there are as yet no commonly accepted, established guidelines for the use of VNRs.

Further, no systematic study on the development of VNRs, their status quo, or the implications/applications of VNRs has yet been conducted. The research from which this study is derived was the first indepth investigation of VNRs and how they are used. A coorientation model was applied to determine the attitudes and approaches to VNRs of both public relations professionals who produce or provide them, and television news directors who act as gate keepers of their use.

To completely investigate the VNR phenomenon is beyond the scope of this work. However, a substantial understanding of VNRs as they relate to public relations professionals and to the television news industry can be derived from the following report. The next section defines the three types of VNRs in place today, followed by a brief discussion of the coorientation approach used in this research and the rationale for its selection, a description of the methodology employed and results derived from the research, and some comments for future investigators.

Video News Releases: Definition

There are three forms of video news release -- traditional VNRs, satellite media tours (SMT) and teleconferences.

Video News Release. The video news release (VNR), also known as the "electronic press release" or "newsclip," is a collection of film footage and words complete with on-the-spot interviews and narration, constituted so that it resembles a news feature (Rubin, 1985). Most VNRs range from 90 seconds to two minutes in length, and usually include everything from background shots that can be edited into a story to a fully produced piece that is ready to air. VNRs are products of new media technologies of communication satellites and the videotape recorder. They are delivered to networks, affiliates, independent stations and cable television free of charge for "unrestricted" use.

Video news releases are not commercials, although they often contain visuals or verbal mentions of a product or brand. In contrast to a commercial, a VNR is aired on a news show, the most credible time slot on television. VNRs differ significantly from television commercials in that they deliver a client-controlled message without revealing the sponsor's identity to the audience (Rubin, 1985; Secunda, 1990). Good VNRs are indistinguishable from the news and feature stories that surround them. On slow days with large "news holes," VNR use is often expanded (Secunda, 1990).

Although a VNR may be of broadcast quality and look and sound like a television news report, it is actually a quasi-news report serving as a promotion. It is a timely and inexpensive alternative for news directors in rounding out newscasts, which are costly to produce (Foley, 1985), however most VNRs are aired with no hint that they are not prepared by the station's news staff.

Satellite Media Tour. Satellite media tours (SMTs), which employ satellite broadcasting technology, are a form of VNR. Increasingly originating from on-site locations, satellite media tours allow a newsmaker to be interviewed via satellite by television reporters around the country or world. SMTs are now seen as a key public relations tool for addressing breaking news affecting a client. TV news directors seem to like the one-on-one interview format of SMTs because it provides them with some control over the interviews (Shell, 1992). A growing number of SMTs originate from exotic, unusual locations which provide "eye-catching pictures" that TV stations want. "A talking head" is no longer enough. With SMTs, a public relations practitioner can place corporate spokespersons and celebrities on local television news (Rosenthal, 1986), or link a distant expert with television studios so local reporters can interview him one-on-one (Carey, 1990).

Teleconference. The teleconference, sometimes known as a videoconference, is a live meeting between people at two or more "sites" connected via television. A teleconference can be domestic or even global in nature. As an example, in May of 1986, Coca-Cola celebrated its 100th anniversary with one of the largest international satellite broadcasts ever put together -- a live broadcast enabling some 15,000 Coca-Cola bottlers, employees and guests attending the company's centennial party in Atlanta to see and hear the celebrations of colleagues on five other continents for a simultaneous sing-along of "Happy Birthday" to Coke (Albert, 1987). Eighty two stations in 60 markets picked up the satellite feed of this video (The Moving Picture, 1989).

From the definitions just given, one can see that VNRs are intended by their producers as free sources of information designed to get across to television viewers specific, client-controlled messages. As such, VNRs are a sort of information subsidy to the television newsroom and have their place in the newsgathering system. Before continuing on to discuss the relevance of the coorientation model to this research, it is important to first examine the role of the VNR as an information subsidy, for this bears on the entire process of newsroom gatekeeping relative to this product.

The VNR as an Information Subsidy

Journalists, including television journalists, prefer to maintain control over their work, selecting who and what to use in their reporting. To a certain extent, the producer and distributor of news releases, including VNRs, provide free information which the journalist can use or refuse, as needed. These no-cost products are information subsidies -- they provide newsrooms with information which might not otherwise be available, and they do it in a timely and inexpensive fashion. This is especially valuable today, when newsrooms are called on to provide an increasing share of a station's overall operating revenue while budgets for news gathering are often stagnant or reduced. Any free information reduces the need to expend funds for film and reportage to fill a newshole.

Gandy (Murrie, 1990) contends that journalists tend to use information subsidies that can be easily converted into stories for publication or broadcast. These subsidies tend to be timely and inexpensive for journalists. Gandy defines an information subsidy as

> an attempt to produce influence over the actions of others by controlling their access to and use of information relevant to those actions. The information is characterized as a subsidy because the source of that information causes it to be made available at some-thing less than the cost a user would face in the absence of the subsidy (1982, p. 61).

To Gandy (1982, p. 62), the delivery of an information subsidy through the news media may involve an effort that reduces the cost of producing news faced by a reporter, journalist or editor. Faced with time constraints and the need to produce stories that will win publication, journalists will attend to, and make use of, subsidized information that is of a type and form that assists them in achieving their goals. Gandy contends that by reducing the costs faced by journalists in satisfying organizational requirements, the subsidy giver increases the probability that his/her subsidized information will be used.

In his 1957 explication of an "economic theory of democracy," Anthony Downs indicates that the costs of gathering, selecting, analyzing and interpreting information can be borne by others (Gandy, 1982, p. 27). After discussing the nature of costs associated with information gathering and use, Downs concludes that the use of some subsidized information is totally rational -- or, at the very least, impossible to avoid.

Turow (1989) describes the relationship between sources and journalists as "symbiotic." To Gandy (1982, p. 13), it is clear that journalists and other gatekeepers benefit from the relationships they establish. Other researchers have suggested that regular contact between journalists and their sources may lead to some degree of personal identification (Donohue, Tichenor and Olien, 1973, p. 656).

The value of "controlled access" to target audiences through mass media channels is of ultimate importance to the source. Besides control of the message, timing of an information release may also play an important role in the use of the distribution-control mechanism (Gandy, 1982, p. 3).

Sources also attempt to attain credibility. Estimates of source credibility may be based in part on knowledge of that source's interest in the information; information from interested sources is seen as less credible or less valuable than that from disinterested sources (Gandy, 1982, p. 61). Gandy indicates that, because of the relationship between credibility and source interest, subsidy providers have an incentive to hide or disguise their relationship to the information they provide. Further, sources (which Gandy called "information providers") are sensitive to price and quality, give careful consideration to the economies of scales associated with the use of information, and follow rules similar to those of their consumers -- where consumers seek to maximize utility, producers also seek to maximize objective functions (Gandy, 1982, p. 31) .

Turk (1986) claims that the sources who "lead" journalists are mostly public relations representatives working on behalf of institutions and organizations. These sources seek to influence first media content and then the opinions of the publics who rely on the media for information. Since the dissemination of information is central to the practice of public relations, the media themselves become an important public to the sources.

To Turow (1989), tying the public relations process to the notion of information subsidy widens news research avenues in a number of important ways. It also raises questions about the symbiotic relationships the journalists have with their sources. The information subsidy model suggests a range of questions about the role "issue management" firms play in directing or hindering agenda-building, and points to the importance of understanding how the public relations industry uses new technologies to reach audiences.

In producing VNRs, that is, in originating news (or what practitioners view as news) and providing this news to the media in information subsidies in the form of press releases, news conferences and briefings or official reports, public relations practitioners are acting primarily in a proactive manner (Turk, 1986). Public relations information subsidies may not be a respected source of information for journalists, who claim to prefer personally gathering facts and figures rather than relying upon others. However, Turk (1986) found that journalists do use information subsidies provided by public relations practitioners:

> . . . when there's consumption of an organization's message by the media -- when the organization's information is made a part of the media's agenda and content -- the organization stands at least a chance of influencing the public agenda (p. 5).

This process of influencing the public agenda, as attempted by a VNR producer, is enhanced if the public relations firm handling a VNR is able to coorient positively with the first stage target, the television newsroom and its director. This positive coorientation is often not the case. The following section describes the coorientation process as it relates to public relations and the news business.

Coorientation: Public Relations and the News Business

According to Chaffee and McLeod's coorientation model, the public relations practitioner constantly "coorients" with the news director by trying to determine what the news director will accept. The news director, on the other hand, also coorients in thinking he knows the intentions of the practitioner. Studying the coorientation process between these two groups of professionals should reveal their thoughts, their attitudes toward VNRs, and the extent to which they understand each other. Presumably, these two groups of media specialists have very different opinions on VNRs, either because of their job nature or because of their experience and training. Their understanding of the VNR and its usage should help in ascertaining the development and the future applications of VNRs and the electronic "gatekeeping" rationale.

This process of coorienting is critical to understanding the VNR phenomenon. VNRs are client-related public relations tools which have no impact on, or relevance to the ultimate target -- the television viewer in the home -- unless they are first accepted for broadcast by an intermediary audience -- the television station news director. If the public relations firm which generates or distributes a VNR does not view the product in the same light as the news director, or to an even more important extent, if the VNR generator or distributor does not accurately perceive the needs of the news director or the director's views on VNRs as a whole, then the entire process of developing and releasing VNRs can break down. Thus, it is critical to the process that each party should understand the purposes and needs of the other.

In the case of VNRs, where a public relations practitioner attempts to place information favorable to a client, the news director is in a stronger position. The public relations practitioner, then, is required to expend more effort and go the extra mile in determining the needs and views of the news room; news room operators have little to lose by refusing to run particular VNRs, while a PR strategy employing VNRs will fail if the VNRs are not accepted for use.

Coorientation research on the so-called "symbiotic" relationship between journalists and public relations practitioners provides a close-up view of how the two parties see each other, how they know each other, and how they feel about each other. Such feelings may be projected onto their mutual medium -- VNRs. Whether these two groups see VNRs from the same angle, and whether they know about each other's different perceptions on VNRs, can explain the VNR acceptance rate. As with traditional print press releases, like it or not, news directors do use VNRs, and the rapid growth and impact of VNRs is yet to be measured.

Methodology

The literature review of this research required a thorough examination of all relevant, available documents. The quantitative section relies heavily on a scientifically conducted questionnaire-based survey of both public relations practitioners and television news directors throughout the United States. Two sets of questionnaires were designed for, respectively, public relations practitioners and news directors. The questionnaires are similar in content but contain small differences made necessary by characteristics of their targeted respondents. Because any attempt to thoroughly understand a research problem must proceed from both a quantitative and a qualitative examination of its important aspects (Wimmer and Dominick, 1991, p. 46), an additional qualitative evaluation was employed in which three selected television newspeople and three public relations practitioners were interviewed. This use of a quantitative-qualitative triangulation approach resulted in an enhanced understanding of VNRs in their public relations/newsroom environment.

Quantitative Methodology

This section details the procedures employed in the quantitative, survey-based section of the research, starting with the pre-test of the survey and concluding with a discussion of the statistics applied to analyze the collected data.

The following section will present a discussion of the qualitative research methodology, specifically the in-depth interview procedures.

Pre-test. In order to ascertain the precision of the survey questionnaires, a mailed pre-test complets with self-addressed envelopes was sent to 35 Ohio public relations practitioners and 35 television news directors, for a total of seventy questionnaires mailed. Public relations practitioners were selected from the 1993-94 *PRSA Register* (1993) while the news directors' names were picked from the December 1993 issue of SRDS *Spot TV & Cable Source* (1993). Both directories have a section in which listed members were sorted by states; names for both groups were picked randomly from the Ohio state sections of the respective publications. Based on comments from the pretest sample, the questionnaires were revised before final mailing.

During this pre-test, a major problem was identified in the public relations practitioner sampling procedure. Many of the public relations practitioners who did respond were unable to answer the VNR-related section of the questionnaire. The reason was simple: They do not do VNRs. Since there is no way to tell from the *PRSA Register* whether its members are public relations practitioners, professors of public relations at universities, or people in any possible public relations related profession, it was difficult to locate those public relations practitioners with VNR experience, whether working in a corporation or an agency. As a result, many of the practitioners chosen, while media communication specialists, did not have experience with VNRs. It is believed that among PRSA members, agency public relations practitioners are more likely to have experience with VNRs than company public relations specialists, because more small- or medium-size company public relations people are PRSA members. However, there was no way to tell whether the chosen PRSA members worked for an agency or a company just by their firm names and titles.

Selecting public relations practitioners with VNR experience, while problematic, might have reduced the response rate and skewed the whole picture of the pre-test. There were also problems with the selection of television news directors. Some of the responding television stations reported that they are independent stations, and thus do not have a news department. Since many independent stations do have news departments, and there is also no way to tell in advance whether an independent station has a news department or not, it was decided to include independent stations in the mass mailing.

The pre-test yielded precious feed back on the design and wording of the questionnaires, the selection of respondents and some general information for the survey. All of the findings were implemented to improve the actual survey.

Sampling. In order to avoid the problem of mailing to practitioners who do not have experience with VNRs, a laborious multiple stage sampling procedure was applied to identify relevant practitioners. There are 108 PRSA Chapters in the United States (*PRSA Register*, 1993). A random number (four) was chosen from the "Table of Random Units" in *CRC Standard Mathematical Tables* (1987, p. 597 ff.). From the fourth PRSA Chapter on an alphabetized list, the researcher selected every third number until 36 PRSA Chapters were picked. Using a snowball approach, the researcher then called the presidents of each of the selected Chapters and asked each president to provide names, addresses and telephone numbers of practitioners in their individual Chapters whose businesses are in some way related to VNRs. If the president or telephone number was not available, it was replaced by the next name on the original list of 108 Chapters. The procedure yielded altogether 76 names of public relations practitioners from all parts of the country. Most of the practitioners selected worked in agencies, some in production houses, and very few for corporations/non-profit institutions or universities. All or most have handled VNRs.

In addition to the names collected from PRSA Chapter presidents, a listing of video firms in the April 1993 issue of *O'Dwyer's PR Service Report* (1993), which profiled 125 video firms around the country, was included as a supplement to the mailing list. Since some of the video firms have offices in different cities around the country, *O'Dwyer's* list resulted in a total of 132 video firms. With the 76 names from Chapter presidents, a total of 208 questionnaires were sent to public relations respondents.

As in the pre-test, the December 1993 version of SRDS *Spot TV & Cable Source* (1993) was used to identify television stations around the country. A regular interval sampling procedure was used from a randomly chosen starting point. The randomly chosen point -- in this case, two -- was selected by the same method from the same random table mentioned earlier (*CRC Standard Mathematical Tables*, 1987, p. 597 ff.). There are 209 ADI (area of dominance) market rankings in the United States; starting from the second ADI market (Los Angeles, California), every seventh market was picked. The process continued to the 205th market (Presque Isle, Maine), yielding a total of 30 markets. All television stations listed in these 30 markets were included on the mailing list, including independent stations. All seven national networks and the 15 cable networks that were most likely to provide news programs (sports news is not included) were also included. A total of 173 news directors' addresses were collected, making a total of 381 subjects for both groups. A cover letter and self-addressed return envelope was sent along with each questionnaire. A second wave of questionnaires was sent to increase the response rate following the collection of initial returned instruments.

Questionnaire Construction. Two sets of questionnaires were constructed and mailed to the two groups of respondents in the survey. The first questionnaire was constructed for news directors. There are four parts in the questionnaire -- general information as Part 1, VNR-related items as Part 2, a five-point Likert scale as Part 3, and the coorientation section as Part 4. The same structure applied to the public relations practitioners questionnaire.

The general information part comprised mostly demographic items, serving as independent variables for the survey. Most of the questions in Part 2 are multiple-choice-like questions, with mutually exclusive break-downs for respondents to choose from. A few questions in this part require the respondents to rank certain answers that they think are most applicable. Part 3 requires the respondents to react to certain statements, the answers of which were arranged on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Part 4 is the most important part in this questionnaire, for without this part it would be impossible to measure agreement, congruency and accuracy. In other words, without this part, it would be impossible to measure coorientation.

Most of the questions in Part 4 are redirected questions from Parts 2 and 3. The only difference is that the respondents, in this case news directors, are asked to answer them by thinking how a public relations practitioner would answer these questions. The first answer shows what the news director believes, and the second answer -- the coorientation answer -- tells what the news director thinks what practitioners believe. The relationship of these two sets of answers is called *congruency*. The same rationale applies to the questionnaire for public relations practitioners.

The public relations practitioner questionnaire is basically of the same format as the news directors', with the exception of a few questions. However, most questions that were asked in the news director questionnaire were asked again in the public relations practitioner questionnaire. The response to this item, together with the response to the related item in Part 2 of the news directors' questionnaire, was used to measure *agreement*. The response to this item in Part 2 of the practitioners' questionnaire, together with the response to the related item in Part 4 of the news directors' questionnaire, was used to measure *accuracy*. And vice versa.

According to definition, to the extent that one person's cognitions resemble another's, there is agreement. To the extent that one person thinks the other's opinions resemble his own, there is congruency. Given this definition, we can define congruency as "perceived agreement." Also, to the extent that one person's perception of the other's cognitions resembles the true cognitions, there is accuracy.

Without Part 4 of both questionnaires, one can only measure the *agreement* of the two groups by comparing both groups' answers to the same questions asked in both questionnaires. With Part 4 in both questionnaires, one can measure the *congruency* of each group, which is the relationship between what news directors (or PR practitioners) believe and what they think what PR practitioners (news directors) believe. By comparing responses in Part 4 of each questionnaire to the responses to the same items in Parts 2 or 3 of the other questionnaire, one can measure *accuracy*, and vice versa.

In the public relations practitioner's questionnaire, respondents were asked to answer four rank-ordering questions about their own perceptions of VNRs; news directors were asked three such questions. Respondents from both groups were given many items to rank in each question. Items derived from the extensive literature review in Chapter Two include: the problems of the VNR industry today; criteria for selecting VNRs for airplay; VNR subjects most likely to be selected for use; and (asked only of public relations practitioners) methods used to better understand news directors' preferences. In addition to the existing literature, some of the items in the question on likely subjects to gain airplay were taken from a 1993 survey of news directors/assignment editors conducted by West Glen public relations company. Feedback from the pretest also contributed one item in the four rank-ordering questions.

Operational Definitions: Accuracy, Agreement & Congruency

In this research, coorientational and other data were obtained from two groups with a common object -- VNRs. Operational definitions of the coorientation variables and other variables measured in this study are included below (Meiller, 1976):

Accuracy: Accuracy refers to the relationship between the means of the scores one group estimates another group will give to the problem categories and the means of the actual scores given by that latter group.

Agreement: Agreement refers to the relationship between the means of the scores given by one group for the problem category set and the means of the scores given by another group for the problem category set.

Congruency: Congruency refers to the relationship between the means of the scores given by one group for the importance of each category and the means of the scores that the group estimated another group would give each problem category.

Independent Variables

Part 1 of each questionnaire was comprised of demographic items that provide respondent profiles. For both groups, the following respondent data were solicited: gender, age, educational background, years in current occupation and size of the employing organization. Television news directors were additionally asked to provide: The ADI rank of their broadcast area, station type (affiliated, independent, or network), and station budget trends. Public relations practitioners were asked to provide similar, yet intrinsically different data, concerning organization type (agency, production house, corporations, government office, non-profit organization).

The variable Profession was repeatedly used in testing hypotheses. Many differences between these two groups were tested with Profession as the independent variable and other questions as the dependent variables. Through chi-square or T-tests, one can tell whether there is a significant difference in the responses of the two groups.

ADI ranking of the television stations was used as the independent variable in a partial test of Hypotheses 1 and 2. ADI ranking, ranging from the second to the 205th television markets by households covered around the United States, was recoded into a continuous ranking scale from 1 through 30. When this ordinal independent variable was pitted against a dichotomous dependent variable, a Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney Test was applied.

Number of employees of the respondents' stations, measured on an interval scale, was also used as the independent variable. When pitting this variable against a dichotomous yes-no question, a T-test was applied.

Dependent Variables

Parts 2 and 3 of both questionnaires elicit perceptions, attitudes and expectations of VNRs and predictions of VNR developments. Issues concerning VNR labeling, use of B-rolls, ethical and legal considerations of VNR use and future trends of VNRs were also addressed. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were obtained for these dependent variables and were important in determining the degree to which the two groups coorient on VNRs.

Frequencies and general descriptive statistics were used to provide descriptions of a nonanalytical nature of the two groups under investigation. In addition, since the purpose of certain hypotheses was not to compare the two groups, the frequency procedure was used.

Some questions required the respondents to rank certain answers. For these, a Spearman's rank order correlation coefficient was applied to compare the accuracy of prediction on VNRs given by the two groups.

Chi-square was used when categorical or nominal data were crosstabulated. The independent variables in the crosstabulation are mostly demographic in nature (e.g., Profession). The dependent variables in such crosstabulations were mostly yes-no question items from the questionnaires or five-point Likert scale answers.

Part 3 of both questionnaires is a five-point Likert scale where responses range from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Each point was assigned a value and the means of both groups will be compared. While treating Likert scale items as interval scale data for analysis purposes is not uncommon, this research took a more rigorous stand and applied Student's T-test to only part of the relevant hypotheses. The independent variable in these T-tests was either

Profession or such interval scale variables as the numbers of employees of the respondent's company. As with chi-square statistics, the purpose of the T-test was to compare the means of the two groups.

Computation of Accuracy, Agreement & Congruency

In computing accuracy, agreement and congruency, more complicated statistical procedures were employed. Since the study only hypothesized *agreement* and *accuracy* on specific points, the determination of agreement and accuracy required applying statistical analysis (chi-square and Spearman's *rho*) only to specific questions. However, hypothesized general *congruency* levels within the two groups were determined from a mean difference score of multiple items. As a result, while only three items were tested for agreement and two items were tested for accuracy, all related questions were included in testing the congruency hypothesis.

The literature review indicates that the two professions do not agree overall on VNRs. However, the literature does indicate that there might be intergroup agreements on specific points raised in the questionnaires. Where agreement is posited for these specific points in several hypotheses, the chi-square statistic was used.

For accuracy, the literature indicates that practitioners are better able to predict news directors' preferences on VNR subjects and selection criteria than vice versa. Spearman's rank order correlation coefficient *rho* was applied to two questions involving rank ordering subjects and selection criteria; the resulting *rho* values of the two groups were then compared.

From the literature, the author hypothesized that the general congruency between the two groups will be low. Responses to relevant items were computed in units on the 5-point Likert scale. Intra-person inter-item difference scores were calculated to determine congruency levels in each group. Difference scores were calculated, without noting the sign or direction of the difference, of public relations practitioners' responses concerning their own beliefs and beliefs they attributed to news directors. Results of each item calculation were summed, then a mean was taken across the included variables. A similar procedure was used to determine difference scores for news directors' own beliefs and beliefs attributed to public relations practitioners. Results for each item were similarly summed and a mean was taken across the included variables. Confidence intervals were then calculated to determine the degree of congruency of both groups.

Qualitative Methodology

The present section discusses the methodology used in the qualitative part of the research; it describes the methods used in the intensive interviewing of subjects and in deriving and presenting results of those interviews.

Sampling. Six interviewees -- three television newspeople and three public relations practitioners -- were selected for in-depth interviews on VNRs and VNR-related matters. All newspeople interviewed were located in Columbus, Ohio, the 34th ADI market. Three of the public relations practitioners interviewed were selected from firms in Columbus, Ohio; the fourth was Assistant Vice President for University Relations, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio.

Data Collection. Patton (1990, p. 280) defined the three basic approaches to collecting qualitative data through open-ended interviews: the informal conversational interview; the general interview guide approach; and the standardized open-ended interview. This informal approach to the design of the interview relies entirely on the spontaneous generation of questions in the natural flow of an interaction. As this could not be guaranteed to elicit all of the information needed by the researcher, a general interview guide approach was adopted in which the researcher prepared an outline of issues that were to be explored before the interviewing began. The interview guide simply served as a basic checklist during the interview to make sure that all relevant topics were covered.

Interviews with the six interviewees were taped and transcribed in their entirety. The transcripts provided the necessary raw data for analysis.

Thematization. To conduct thematic analysis requires a brief discussion of themes. According to Van Manen (1990, p. 89), a theme is the needfulness or desire to make sense. To Bogdan and Biklen (1992, p. 186), a theme serves as a focus in which items share some "big idea" quality; "A theme is some concept or theory that emerges from your data." "Theme analysis refers then to the process of recovering the theme or themes that are embodied and dramatized in the evolving meanings and imagery of the work" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 78). Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 246) held that the human mind finds patterns so quickly and easily that it needs no how-to advice; "Patterns just 'happen,' almost too quickly. We rapidly make 'stories' from a range of data."

The recurring patterns, or themes, in an interview thus capture the "essence" of an account (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 8), and lead us to a "practical understanding" of meanings and actions. Thematization was applied to analyze the raw data from the in-depth interviews. An explanation of the linkage of the themes to the literature follows each theme. A brief summary is provided after each profession's interview analysis to give a whole picture of the findings.

Procedures. The researcher referred to pre-written questions as guides during the interviews, but related questions prompted by responses were also asked to maintain the flow of the conversation and to pursue new avenues of investigation. The pre-written guides were open-ended questions derived from the literature review and centered around the three research questions.

Each interview was taped, and complete transcripts of each interview were prepared before investigating their contents for themes. Intensive attention was applied through several passes to the construction of themes.

Research Questions and Information Gathering

Three general research questions were designed to guide the research. They are:

Research Question 1: What is the place of VNRs? This general question is multifaceted. It includes a broad range of related, subsumed questions which, taken together, can be used to build a comprehensive picture of VNRs. Most basically, do television stations use VNRs? How often do they use them and under what situations do they use them? Further, is there a difference between the use of VNRs between larger and smaller broadcasters? If so, what characteristics result in this differential use?

Research Question 2: The coorientation of the two professions on VNRs. Applying Chaffee and McLeod's coorientation model, public relations practitioners can be seen to constantly "coorient" with news directors by trying to determine what prompts them to adopt a certain VNR. News directors, who may not coorient as vigorously as their practitioner colleagues, do coorient in thinking they know the intentions of the practitioners. The second research question involves the coorientation process between these professions.

Theoretically, these two groups of media specialists perceive VNRs differently, due to the characteristics of their occupations or their training backgrounds. How do news directors and public relations practitioners actually perceive VNRs, and how do their perceptions differ from each other? In other words, to what extent do news directors and public relations practitioners understand each other -- to what extent is there agreement, congruency and accuracy in the coorientation between the two groups on VNRs?

Research Question 3: What makes a VNR more likely to be selected? Though news directors often disparage them, public relations practitioners claim that VNRs have a legitimate place in the newsroom. The gap between the two professions on VNRs should be narrowed but not widened. The third research question thus deals with the electronic "gatekeeping" rationale, in an attempt to ascertain the quality considerations that are most important in enhancing acceptance of VNRs by news directors. The aim of this question is determining how VNRs can be made more acceptable to newspeople.

Findings

This section discusses the general findings of the study.

Descriptive Findings

General responses by public relations practitioners with video news release experience and television news directors around the country are presented here.

Response Rates

Of the 173 television stations contacted, 26 responding independent stations and 20 responding Fox affiliates were later eliminated because they indicated that they did not have news departments. An additional three stations were eliminated when the researcher was informed that there was no current address available to further pursue contact. Fifty completed questionnaires were returned, for a news-department response rate of 40 percent.

A total of 208 public relations practitioners were contacted, of whom 114 returned completed questionnaires. This yields a response rate of 54.8 percent.

In all, 164 completed responses were collected from the 332 eligible respondents selected from the two samples. The overall response rate for both groups was 49.4 percent.

General Findings

Taken together, the sample yielded a mean of 12.13 years in the reported current occupations (ranging from one to 35 years). Broken down by profession, public relations practitioners reported a mean of 12.63 years (ranging also from one to 35 years) and news directors averaged 10.97 years in their current occupation (ranging from one to 30 years). Median reported years in current occupation were 11 years for both groups overall, 12 years for public relations practitioners and 8 years for news directors. An examination of the means and medians of years in current occupation shows that news directors tend to remain fewer years on the job than do public relations practitioners. Perhaps this is because their job is in a more dynamic profession or, as indicated in the literature, some news directors tend to leave their profession and become public relations practitioners.

Of the 164 responses collected from the two professions, 114 were public relations practitioners (comprising 69.5 percent of the sample) and 50 were news directors (comprising 30.5 percent). Taken together, 105 of the 164 respondents were male (64.4 percent) and 58 were female (35.6 percent). Broken down by profession, among the 114 public relations practitioners, 67 were male (58.8 percent) and 47 were female (41.2 percent). Among the 50 news directors, 38 were male (77.6 percent) and 11 were female (22.4 percent). Obviously, then, women were more numerous in the public relations sample than among news directors.

Broken down by profession, the largest number of public relations practitioners (25) fell in the 36 to 40 year old age range, accounting for 21.9 percent of those in the profession. The modal category of news directors (15, or 30.6 percent) fell in the 41 to 45 year old age range. Overall, public relations practitioners were slightly younger than news directors.

Turning to education, 80 public relations respondents (70.2 percent) had a BA or BS as their highest degree. Eighteen (15.8 percent) reported having a master's degree, while two (1.8 percent) had doctorates. In the news director group, 35 respondents (71.4 percent) had a bachelor's degree, while 5 (10.2 percent) had a master's degree and 1 (2 percent) reported an earned PhD. Thus, the educational background profiles of the two groups were very similar. Fifty-eight percent of the public relations respondents and 67 percent of the news directors reported holding journalism-related degrees (college degrees in journalism, telecommunications, public relations, advertising, or news/magazine editing and broadcasting).

The number of full-time employees of public relations organizations ranged from 1 to 5,000. Many agencies are one-man operations, while some corporate public relations respondents reported that their organizations averaged 200 full-time employees or more. Respondents from multinational public relations firms reported thousands of full-time employees all over the world; these large numbers are outliers.

Sixty-two public relations respondents (55.9 percent) worked in an office that had fewer than 20 full-time employees, and 23 (20.7 percent) worked in an office with fewer than 50 but more than 20 employees. These two brackets comprise 76.6 percent of the whole population.

Forty-five (40.5 percent) of the respondents worked in agencies, 34 (30.6 percent) in production houses, five (4.5 percent) in non-profit organizations, 11 (9.9 percent) were employed by corporations and 16 (14. 4 percent) by other types of organizations. Agencies and production houses together comprised 71.1 percent of total full-time employees in reporting organizations. Further, most production-house respondents worked in shops with no more than 20 employees. On the other hand, corporate and nonprofit personnel worked in larger offices.

Video News Releases

When public relations respondents were asked how many VNRs they produced in an average month, 82 of the respondents (87.2 percent) reported turning out no more than five monthly and 8 (8.5 percent) reported producing 6 to 10 per month. These two categories comprised 95.7 percent of the sample. When asked how many VNRs they send out in an average year, 63 (66.3 percent) of the public relations respondents said they send out fewer than 20 VNRs a year. The second highest response category, sending out more than 50 VNRs annually, accounted for 18 (18.9 percent) of all respondents. These two categories comprised 85.2 percent of the whole sample. Thirty-eight news directors (92.7 percent) reported they received no more than five hardcopy VNRs on an average day. Only three (7.3 percent) said they received more -- six to 10 VNRs -- on an average day. These two answers add to 100 percent.

When asked which delivery channel implies greatest credibility, 19 news directors (52.8 percent) reported satellite, three (8.3 percent) reported hardcopy videocassette and 14 (38.9 percent) reported other, mostly because they thought both ways were important. In order to ascertain public relations practitioners' understanding of newscasters' attitude on this question, practitioners were asked which VNR transmission channel they thought has more credibility to news directors. Fifty-eight (66.7 percent) of the public relations respondents reported satellite VNRs had more credibility to newscasters, 11 (12.6 percent) thought videocassette VNRs had more credibility, and 18 (20.7 percent) reported "other" as the answer. Generally speaking, public relations practitioners were correct in thinking the news directors assign satellite VNRs more credibility.

In all, about 69 percent of public relations respondents reported generating videocassette (hardcopy) VNRs most often overall and for late-breaking stories. However, when asked what form of VNRs they use most often for late-breaking stories, 36 (40 percent) reported satellite feed VNRs, 30 (33.3 percent) said teleconferences, and 15 (16.7 percent) reported SMTs (satellite media tours). These findings support contentions in the literature that, with the advent of new communication technology, sending hardcopy VNRs via overnight delivery is now seen as slow and expensive. Satellite feed VNRs have become the most efficient and cost-effective choice, especially for late-breaking news.

Hardcopy VNRs were used most often for non-late-breaking stories. Sixty-one (68.5 percent) of the public relations respondents said they used hardcopy VNRs for non late-breaking stories, while 12 (13.5 percent) reported they use satellite feed. Together, these two categories made up 82 percent of the sample.

News directors were asked whether the respondents' television stations have a policy on the use of VNRs. To this question, 26 stations (61.9 percent) reported having a policy on the use of VNRs, while 16 stations (38.1 percent) do not have one. Those who said "yes" to this question were asked if their station policy is a written or an unwritten policy. Only one (3.6 percent) responding station had a formal written policy on the use of VNRs, while 27 (96.4 percent) reported having only an unwritten policy. There were 22 missing responses to this item; many may simply have left it blank because they did not know the answer. The general message from these findings seems to be that television newsrooms have not faced the VNR phenomenon proactively. Stations have been very passive in dealing with or regulating VNRs.

Seventy-one public relations respondents (75.5 percent) reported that "labeling" means to label the source of a VNR on the cassette slate to newscasters. Only 14 (14.9 percent) reported that labeling means to provide a label on the screen to the audience. However, 29 news directors (76.3 percent) reported that "labeling" means to label the source of the VNR on the screen to the audience, with only seven (18.4 percent) reporting that "labeling" means providing a label on the cassette slate to newscasters. The two professions differ greatly in their understanding of the essential concept of labeling, although both think labeling is a critical means of ensuring responsible VNR use. Such discrepancies may hinder communication between the two groups.

Both groups were asked how they see VNRs developing in the coming five years. Overall, 64.1 percent of the public relations practitioners thought VNRs will increase; i.e., two thirds of the public relations respondents thought that VNRs are trending up. A further 21.7 percent thought that VNR production will remain stable. Only 14.1 percent of the respondents thought VNRs will decrease somewhat or greatly in the coming five years.

Among news directors, eight (20 percent) thought VNRs will increase greatly in the next five years, and 18 (45 percent) thought they will increase somewhat. Together, a total of 65 percent thought that VNRs are trending up. A further 25 percent thought that VNRs will remain stable. Only 10 percent of the news directors thought that VNRs will decrease somewhat or greatly in the coming five years. Thirty (73.2 percent) reported they used VNRs once or less in a typical week, 10 (24.4 percent) said two to three times a week, and only one (two percent) said four to five times a week. Together, the first two categories comprised 97.6 percent of the whole sample.

Inferential Analysis

Data was analysed to determine if the size of a television station newsroom related to the degree of its VNR use. The resulting T-test outcome shows that group 1 has a mean of 22.53 full-time employees and group 2 has a mean of 40.09 full-time employees. With $p = 0.063$ ($t = -1.92$, $\alpha = 0.05$, $df = 39$), this test failed to reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in frequency of VNR use between smaller and larger broadcasters. There are two major reasons that the reported large raw difference in numbers of full-time employees still results in a failure to reject the null hypothesis: 1) the small number of subjects ($N = 41$); and 2) the large standard deviations (22.168 for group 1 and 34.798 for group 2).

In a second test, the number of VNRs used per week was examined with ADI ranking. Since the four values of weekly use were recoded into two categories and ADI ranking was reported on an ordinal scale, a Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test for independent groups was applied between ADI ranking and weekly use. With $W_x = 137.5$ and mean ranks of 20.81 for group 1 (stations that used VNRs once or less in a week) and 15.28 for group 2 (stations that used VNRs twice or more in a week), at $p = 0.191$ ($\alpha = 0.05$), I failed to reject the null hypothesis that there is no difference between frequency of VNR use between the two groups. The small number of subjects may again explain the inability to gain significance when a superficial examination might indicate otherwise. Taken together, the hypothesis that smaller broadcasters use VNRs more frequently than do larger broadcasters was not supported.

A Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test between ADI rankings and positive impression of VNRs indicated that broadcasters in smaller ADIs (smaller markets) view VNRs more positively as sources of information than do larger broadcasters -- $W_x = 53.5$ at $p = 0.048$ ($\alpha = 0.05$). Even with such a small sample ($n = 29$), the difference is significant.

A total of 93.4 percent of the public relations practitioners saw VNRs as positive and credible, but only 80.6 percent of the news directors thought so. With a chi-square of 3.89 at $p = 0.048$ ($\alpha = 0.05$, $df = 1$), the difference is statistically significant.

With a chi-square of 2.92 at $p = 0.232$ ($\alpha = 0.05$, $df = 2$), that both groups agree VNRs may sometimes serve as an impetus to develop a story was found to have significant support. Further, with a chi-square of 6.08 at $p = 0.192$ ($\alpha = 0.05$, $df = 4$, power $= 0.99$ at $\alpha = 0.01$), it was found that both groups strongly support a code of ethics to ensure the credibility of VNRs.

Two sets of rankings were provided. These rankings show how news directors thought public relations practitioners would rank items, and how practitioners truly ranked the same items were derived through the same procedure. The critical values for *rho* in this instance are the same as in the earlier example. Calculations produced *rhos* of 0.68 (critical value = 0.700) for the first and 0.61 (critical value = 0.648) for the second questions. Results show that newscasters seem able to predict the practitioners' rankings to some extent. However, both values were smaller than their associated critical values. Thus, while somewhat high, neither value reaches statistical significance.

To the question, "Do you prefer to use a 'B-roll' to a prepackaged VNR?" 80.5 percent of the news director responded "yes". To determine if those who answered "yes" were significantly different from those who did not answer "yes," a second goodness-of-fit test was run. Inserting the observed and expected values ($n = 38$, accounting for missing and other values), and carrying out the indicated operations yields a chi-square of 20.63 (df = 1), which is larger than the critical value of 3.84 at $\alpha = 0.05$ (Seigel and Castellan, 1988, p. 323). This result is also highly significant.

The easier it is for a television station to exercise editorial control over a VNR, the more likely the VNR is to get airplay. Of the 132 respondents from the two groups who answered this question, 84.1 percent agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, 11.4 percent reported that they were neutral and only 4.6 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed. To determine if the difference among response categories was statistically significant, another goodness-of-fit test was run on those categories. The calculated result was 94.28 (df = 2), which was greater than the critical value of 5.99 at $\alpha = 0.05$ (Seigel and Castellan, 1988, p. 323). This hypothesis is clearly confirmed. When the outcomes of both groups are examined separately, the result is the same.

When asked, "Generally, VNRs delivered via which channel seem to have more credibility?", 52.8 percent of the news directors reported that satellite feed information is most credible, 8.3 percent reported hardcopy, and 38.9 reported other forms. Most who reported "other" indicated that they thought both hardcopy and satellite VNRs are of equal credence. According to this result, most news directors prefer satellite feed VNRs. However, to another reverse-stated item, "Satellite-transmitted VNRs have more credibility than do hardcopy VNRs", 43.6 percent of newscasters strongly disagreed or disagreed, 33.3 percent reported they were neutral, and only 23.1 percent reported agreement. This result conflicts with the previous finding. Thus, this hypothesis is only partially supported.

There is high agreement between news directors and public relations practitioners on VNRs' future growth. In the descriptive section, two thirds of both public relations practitioners and two thirds of news directors thought that VNRs will increase in the coming five years. According to a T-test run of the two groups and their prediction on the development of VNRs in the coming five years, $p = 0.885$ ($\alpha = 0.05$, df = 130). The power of this statistic is 0.99 ($\beta = 0.01$), which is well over 0.80. The null hypothesis is confirmed; i.e., there is no difference between the groups' prediction on growth of VNRs.

Qualitative Results

Thematic analysis of the indepth interviews revealed several main themes. In general, these themes may be summarized as follows. Interviewed newspeople saw television viewers as their primary concern. They constantly considered what viewers find interesting and what they want to see. While free information/footage may be tempting, ratings come first.

Proximity is a very important criterion of news judgment, because it raises the viewers' interest, and interest is what keeps the audience in front of the television. Overall, newspeople were suspicious of VNRs, generally relegating them to the position of event reminders and idea generators in the newsroom. The general newsroom attitude toward VNRs was one of indifference.

Newspeople disapproved of legal requirements for labeling VNRs; they would rather not use VNRs if required by law to identify them on the screen. The waste inherent in hardcopy VNRs, not timeliness, was the major reason journalists preferred satellite feed VNRs. While some practitioners believed evergreen VNRs (mostly hardcopy VNRs) have a better chance to be selected because of their longer shelf life, they could be wrong because newspeople in reality resent the physical piling up of VNRs.

Generally speaking, the interviewed practitioners were much more willing to talk about VNR-related topics than were television newspeople. Practitioners thought they understand newspeople and saw themselves as forming a team with newspeople by providing news ideas and VNRs. Practitioners perceived the influence of "journalistic ego" and urged a more open dialogue with newscasters on areas of mutual concern.

On specific points of labeling VNRs and interpersonal relationships, practitioners generally reported similar, though less strong, stands as did newscasters. Like the newspeople, they also predicted growth of VNRs in the future. Hardcopy VNRs were still popular among the practitioners for various reasons, though newscasters on the whole favored satellite-feeds.

Summary and Discussion of Key Findings

The key findings of both studies are summarized in categorized items together with discussions. Key findings concerning the coorientation between the two groups are discussed first, as they are the major findings of this study. General descriptive findings are presented in a later section.

Agreement. Due to the different natures of the two jobs, the professions may not be in general agreement on all aspects of VNRs. However, the research indicated that they do agree on certain points, including: VNRs are primarily story idea generators for newspeople; both groups longed for some kind of code of ethics to ensure the credibility of VNRs; both groups agreed that the easier it is for a station to exercise editorial control over a VNR, the more likely the VNR is to get airplay; and 5) both groups predicted that VNRs will continue to grow.

Although newspeople were reluctant to admit that VNRs are helpful and they do use VNRs, they agreed that VNRs are the news releases of the 1990s. However, the interview indicated that newspeople seemed to relegate VNRs to a lower level -- to see them only as event reminders. It is not likely that the two groups will soon arrive at a *general* agreement on all VNR aspects.

Disagreement. Practitioners supported the use of VNRs more strongly than did news directors. They thought VNRs have a legitimate place in the newsroom and have contributed much to television news content. News directors disagreed and saw VNRs as public relations promotion disguised as news.

The two groups also disagreed as to whether satellite media tours (SMTs) and teleconferences that gain free access to television news are forms of VNRs. As the literature indicated, news directors preferred SMTs and teleconferences over general VNRs because they can participate in, and have control over their contents when incorporating them into news programming.

The two groups also disagreed on labeling of VNRs. Practitioners defined labeling as providing a label of the VNRs' source on the cassette slate, to identify to the newscasters the source of VNRs. News directors, on the other hand, define labeling as providing a label of the VNR's source on the screen, to the audience. Public relations practitioners' definition of "labeling" was different from that of newspeople. The audience's understanding of labeling is presumed to be in line with that of newspeople's, which is to label on the screen the sources of the VNRs aired.

Although most practitioners thought VNRs should be labeled, that is, on the cassette slate or on the printed materials that come with the VNRs, they tended to shift the decision/responsibility of labeling to news directors. The definition of labeling should be addressed whenever there is a discussion of labeling VNRs. More than two thirds of news directors surveyed thought that VNRs should be labeled, but about one third rarely or never identified the VNRs they used.

The interviews indicated that public relations people thought they form some kind of teamwork with newspeople, but journalists disagreed. Since newspeople primarily see VNRs as event reminders and idea generators, it is not surprising that the two groups disagreed on the notion of teamwork.

Accuracy. Public relations practitioners are presumed to be more motivated to coorient with news directors than vice versa, prompting them to be more accurate in predicting what news directors prefer. This was especially true in predicting such important VNR-related criteria as getting airplay and most preferred subjects. New directors, on the other hand, were not as accurate as practitioners in predicting matters on VNRs.

News directors' top five selection criteria for making airplay decisions were: 1) news value; 2) local news angle; 3) timeliness; 4) the material is picture-rich; and 5) the subject is interesting/educational/human interest. The practitioners' perception of newspeople's selection criteria were the same except for the ranking of timeliness and local angles (practitioners ranked timeliness second and local angle third).

Except for the fifth item, practitioners correctly predicted news directors' five most preferred VNR topics as: 1) health/medical; 2) environmental; 3) entertainment; 4) business/finance; and 5) lifestyle/fashion (instead of lifestyle/fashion, practitioners predicted crisis situations as newspeople's fifth most preferred VNR topic).

The literature had pointed out that the party that is most motivated to coorient with the other party is more accurate at predicting the other party's perception. The two studies indicated that practitioners care about newspeople's reaction and urged an open dialogue between the two groups. But as indicated in the interviews, television viewers were newspeople's highest concern. As a result of these differences in motivation, the two professions exhibit differences in accuracy of predicting the other party's perception.

Congruency. The survey indicated a large gap between news directors and public relations practitioners on matters concerning VNRs. Perceived differences between the two groups were even larger than the true differences. The literature suggested that low congruency indicates a communication breakdown between the two groups. This seems to be the situation here. To open up communication between the two groups can help to solve many of the problems encountered. Open communication can only occur if there is enough motivation on both sides. However, the results of the two studies indicated that public relations people were more aggressive in urging cooperation and an open dialogue between the two parties, while newspeople were much more evasive on these topics. As only one side is strongly motivated to cooperate, useful communication is unlikely.

Journalistic ego. There still is some animosity between the two groups. Public relations practitioners reported that newspeople feel they are a level above their public relations counterparts, and that this attitude is unfounded. They believed newspeople often use VNRs and, for reasons of journalistic ego, refuse to admit it. Such discrepancies further lower the congruency of the two groups and hinder the possible communication between them.

Satellite vs. hardcopy VNRs. All news interviewees preferred satellite VNRs because they provide no waste and are more convenient than hardcopy receipts. But all public relations interviewees reported that they still primarily distributed hardcopy VNRs for various reasons. Which of these two forms of VNRs are more credible and are preferred by newspeople? On the one hand, surveyed news directors responded that VNRs delivered via satellite have more credibility, as public relations people correctly predicted. Yet on the other hand, newspeople disagreed that satellite-transmitted VNRs were more credible than hardcopy VNRs. The two responses conflicted with each other and left this point unanswered.

Smaller broadcasters vs. larger broadcasters. The survey indicated that smaller broadcasters viewed VNRs more positively as sources of information than did larger broadcasters. They also reported having less stringent standards for using VNRs than did larger broadcasters. But the survey failed to support the hypothesis that smaller broadcasters use VNRs more frequently than do larger broadcasters. This may be due to the small number of news respondents or due to the influence of market size in receipt of VNRs.

Examination of ADI ranking with use of VNRs in a week actually indicated that larger broadcasters are more likely to use VNRs. This partial finding conflicts with indications in the literature. This may be due to the supplementary finding that larger broadcasters tend to receive more VNRs than do small broadcasters. However, this indication may be an artifact of the small sample size and suggests a need for further study.

The following presents a summary of descriptive findings:

Biggest problems of VNRs today. To both groups, the biggest problems of VNRs today were: 1) the commercial nature of VNRs; 2) the newsroom's attitude toward VNRs; 3) monitoring VNRs; and 4) legal/ethical issues of VNRs.

Positioning of VNR themes. The interviews showed that each practitioner had his/her own way of positioning VNR themes to make them more appealing to newspeople. This included positioning something as a first occurrence, unique, or a tie-in with an event, a holiday or a celebrity.

Ways to understand the news directors. Practitioners, who are more motivated to coorient with newscasters, reported that the following three methods were most effective in understanding newspeople: 1) intensive telephone contacts; 2) studying the news directors' programs; and 3) reading industry magazines/newsletters.

Demographic findings. In summary, the results indicated that the average public relations practitioner could be of either gender, in his/her late 30s, with a bachelor's degree, and having about 12 years of experience in the profession. A typical news director would be a man in his early 40s, with a bachelor's degree in journalism and about seven or eight years of experience in his current profession.

Concluding Remarks

This study is the first of its kind on coorientation between public relations practitioners and news directors on video news releases. The research serves to:

1. Enhance understanding/communication between public relations practitioners and news directors. As indicated in the study, although the two professions exist more or less in a "symbiotic" relationship, there is a lack of accurate, complete two-way communication between them. Misunderstandings on certain concepts (e.g., definitions of labeling VNRs) are not uncommon and to a degree even result in some animosity. And,

2. Improve knowledge of the overall VNR phenomenon. VNRs are new to society. Although the VNR phenomenon greatly influences the television news gathering process and content, it is relatively unknown to television audiences and the general public. This study provided a close-up look of the VNR's history, growth, technology, controversies, problems, future development and the coorientation between the two professions involved. Such interlocking VNR-related topics offer a deep understanding of the new technology and its by-product -- the VNR -- and how the whole industry functions within today's society.

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"TO OTHERS HE'S JUST A HELPLESS MAN IN A WHEELCHAIR! BUT WHEN I SEE HIM LIKE THIS..."

CASE STUDIES OF PHYSICAL DISABILITY IN MARVEL COMICS, 1961-70

A paper presented to the Media and Disability Interest Group of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication at the national conference, August 10th, 1995, Washington, DC, USA

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ABSTRACT

The role of comics in both shaping and reflecting popular opinion is now widely recognised. When disabled characters appear, they are almost always stereotypes -- either all good, or all bad. This paper focuses on a particularly influential publisher -- the Marvel Comics Group -- in a particularly influential decade, the 1960s. Case studies are provided of two mobility-impaired characters, Dr Don Blake and Professor Xavier. Both are portrayed as incapacitated men, forced to live their lives through others -- Blake through his alter ego, Thor, and Xavier through his students, the X-Men. Both are morally good and self-sacrificing.

In a decade otherwise noted for liberalisation, disabled people were still depicted in a cliched and inaccurate manner. Mobility impairment, in particular, seems to have presented problems in comic books. The nature of the medium itself may, in part, have been responsible for this.

Comics are read by large numbers of people from a wide variety of backgrounds. The comics of the 60s have helped shape current thinking. For these reasons, their study is important to students of mass communication and journalism.

"TO OTHERS HE'S JUST A HELPLESS MAN IN A WHEELCHAIR! BUT WHEN I SEE HIM LIKE THIS..."

CASE STUDIES OF PHYSICAL DISABILITY IN MARVEL COMICS, 1961 - 1970.

INTRODUCTION

Comics are a simple medium which deals with complex issues (Berger, 1971), including, in the decade considered, racism, ecology, civil liberties, and disability. They have been seen as both legitimators of middle class capitalism (Kasen, 1980) and a critical reflection of American society (McCue, 1993). For example,

> Since 1962, The Amazing Spiderman had helped to shape and reflect the American character... because it has enjoyed a popularity and thus an influence second to no other comic book.
>
> (Mondello, 1976, p.237)

To understand current stereotypes of disability it is useful to examine historical portrayals (Rao and Haller, 1993, and Davidson, 1994). By looking at a decade of comic books, we can trace the change and development in the types of imagery used.

Comics are read by a large and diverse group of people of all ages (Berger, 1971, McCue, 1993). They are an important and influential part of our culture (Skidmore, 1983) and "show us ourselves and our attitudes in a funhouse mirror, the images exaggerated but still recognisable" (Daniels, 1991, p.14).

Periodical publication gives them a more immediate interaction with the readership than other art forms:

> ...in order to maintain sales, heroes changed with the times...
>
> (McCue, 1993, p.77)

Comics reflect current tastes and values, which in turn reflect the dominant ideology of the period. Writers and artists work to strict deadlines which allow little time for consideration;

> [t]hey are, therefore, more likely to use what is at hand and reflect temporary and specific cultural prejudices and attitudes.
>
> (McCue, 1993, p.5)

Comics have a value as a barometer of changing public opinion. This is well illustrated by Andrae (1987), Pecora and Gateward (1989) and McCue (1993) who have all traced the development of Superman in response to contemporary social attitudes:

> 1940s-1950s, isolationism and quiet conservatism;

> 1960s, liberalization and radicalization; 1970s, humanization; 1980s, political and social conservatism of the Reagan era.
> (Pecora and Gateward, 1989, cited Pecora, 1992, p.67)

Comics are serious works (Skidmore, 1983) written for the mass market, often catering to simple tastes, and not necessarily attempting a naturalistic portrayal of society

> -- they have a much higher proportion of heroes and villains, the girls tend to be much better looking,the situations tend to be more dramatic and improbable --
> (Berger, 1971, p.165)

Despite this, important American values are still apparent (Berger, 1971). Self-sufficiency and courage in the face of adversity are frequently enshrined; as Matt Murdock (Daredevil) tells the newly-blind Willie Lincoln,

> It's a tough load to carry, Will -- but it can be done!
> (Daredevil No.47, December, 1969, p.14)

In this paper, we examine portrayals of physical disability in Marvel Comics between 1961 and 1970. Innovations by writer/editor Stan Lee and a number of artists placed the emphasis on character, rather than gimmickry (Daniels, 1991), and helped to revitalize the comic book industry (McAllister, 1990). These were the comics that we and our contemporaries read when young, and which, to some degree, must have shaped the attitudes and behaviour of modern society.

We provide case studies of two characters with mobility impairments: Dr Don Blake and Professor Xavier.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Disability has always been present in society. Evidence of its existence has been apparent in the earliest forms of visual art. The link between disability and comics started early. Rao and Haller, 1993, found that disability was frequently portrayed in comic-type traditions in pre-literate India and Europe.

In the United States, the first modern comic strip, Richard Outcault's "The Yellow Kid" (first seen in the New York World of 1895) features a hero who is vulgar, satirical and "[u]gly, almost Mongoloid in appearance" (Estren, 1993, p.25).

Nevertheless, despite this early use of a disabled character, we found a scarcity of research concerning disability issues and comics, especially compared with the interest in disability representations in both children's and adults' literature dating back to the beginning of the century (Paterson, 1917, Langworthy, 1930, Baskin, 1974, Bogdana, 1982, Byrd, Williamson and Byrd, 1986, Reiser, 1990, Morris, 1991, Davidson, 1994).

Weinberg and Santana (1978) sampled forty different superhero comic books and found that people with physical disabilities fell into two categories -- they were represented as either good or evil. 57% of disabled people were considered to be evil, 43% considered to be good; and none were in a neutral category. Thurer (1980) supported these findings:

> [t]he disabled have a bad literary press... There are almost no average or ordinary and 'by the way' physically aberrant characters.
>
> (p.12).

In explaining these results, Rao and Haller (1993) cited the phenomenon of spread as delineated in Goffman's concept of stigma (1963), by which physical difference discredits the entire individual; somebody portrayed as physically deviant is also considered to be morally deviant (Wright, 1960, Weinberg and Santana, 1978). Disability as inadequacy or as a malformation of character is particularly pronounced in comics (Gazsi, 1994).

Weinberg and Santana offer several explanations for these extreme portrayals of good and evil. Because a physically disabled person is seen to have overcome

> his or her inferiorities, he or she cannot be average. Only those few who are special, blessed or extraordinary, could

> raise above the assumed pervasive negative effects of disability.
> (p.330)

Alternatively, disabled people might be considered to be virtuous only because their opportunities are limited.

On the other hand, some people may believe disabled people are angry and bitter about their condition and want revenge on the able-bodied; hence their characterization as evil.

Dr DON BLAKE

The modern superhero formula, as defined by Superman (first appearing in Action Comics no.1, June 1938), leans heavily on compensation fantasy; the bumbling, ineffectual Clark Kent rips off his shirt and turns into the Man of Steel -- surely the dream of every frustrated "little man" in history, not to mention the children and adolescents who made up the bulk of comic book readership (McCue, 1993).

For issue 83 of Journey Into Mystery (August 1962), the Marvel writer/artist team of Lee and Kirby extrapolated this dichotomy still further. Frail Dr Blake is lame and sickly, but only needs to strike his cane upon the ground to be transformed into the mighty Thor -- not just a superman, but a god, no less!

The physical contrast between Blake and Thor was heavily emphasised in early stories. The artist's drawing of Blake gives the impression of extreme frailty. Blake's nurse reminds him to take allergy pills, vitamin tablets, and to stay out of draughts (Journey Into Mystery 87, December 1962, p.2). There is a suggestion that, though a good man, his disability has kept him from the good acts that he wished to do. "My bum leg kept me out of the Korean War," he complains; and, though this is just part of a cover to conceal his real intentions, we are told it is a "convincing story" (ibid, p.3). As Dr Blake, he is helpless; but as the Mighty Thor, he can take on the "Reds" and win.

If we assume Blake stands in for the reader, the powerless child or adolescent who has little control over the world, we might see the changes in him as reflections of a changing social climate, in which -- as the 60s wore on -- young people gained a greater sense of identity and empowerment. In addition, the comic book audience was becoming older and more sophisticated (Daniels, 1973, Mondello, 1976). We can see a general move away from "weak" characters. Berger (1971) has noted how Spiderman's alter-ego, Peter Parker, changed from college nerd to motorbiking Elvis Presley look-alike. The compensation-fantasy elements became less clear cut. The superhero became less "super", and his everyday identity more "capable".

Thus Blake became more Thor-like; still dependent on his cane, perhaps, but handsome, even rugged in appearance, and certainly no longer powerless in life. As a medical doctor, he, too, could do his bit to cure the evils of society.

In a dramatic sense, though, problems still remained, and the character never really came to life (Daniels, 1991). Eventually, he was revealed as just an avatar of Thor, incarnated on Earth by Odin in a frail body to learn "the lesson of... humility!" Blake's thoughts are telling: "Even my injured leg had an Odinian purpose... to teach me that any handicap can be endured... and overcome! And so I studied... and worked... and finally triumphed...! Donald Blake became... a surgeon!" (Thor 159, December, 1968, p.20).

PROFESSOR XAVIER

As leader of the X-Men, wheelchair-using Professor Xavier was not so much a featured hero as a mentor, guiding from a distance with his telepathic powers.

His appearance -- bald-headed, physically incapacitated -- echoes earlier comic book and pulp science fiction portrayals of mentally-advanced beings with enfeebled bodies; the Mekon, for example, in the British strip, Dan Dare, who even rides round on a kind of flying "wheelchair".

Unlike such characters, Xavier is human, having lost the use of his legs in an accident (X-Men 12, July, 1965), but a similar dualism (body or mind, but not both) seems to be encapsulated in him; also, the popular misconception that anybody hampered physically must make up for it with an increase in other faculties.

Comparisons with later, sentimental versions of the "Elephant Man" story might be drawn, as well (eg. David Lynch's film, 1980). Here, an exceptional mind is portrayed as trapped in a defective body (Howell, 1980). As Marvel Girl thinks, in X-Men 13, September 1965: "To others he's just a helpless man in a wheelchair! But, when I see him like this, I sense courage... and power... such as few humans can ever comprehend!" (p.4).

The Professor's incapacity served a convenient dramatic purpose. Like Don Blake, his disability prevented him from taking direct physical action, and so he trained others to do it for him. The X-Men themselves were teenagers (following the success of Spiderman, Marvel's first teenage superhero), and Professor X directed them, set their missions, schooled them, etc. He provided the impetus, just as a spy's superior in a spy story provides the motivation for whatever action follows.

Les Daniels, however, sees the introduction of Professor X into the series as a mistake. He was an authority figure: "If kids with built in death rays still had to attend classes, what use were superpowers after all?" (Daniels, 1991, p.113). With Spiderman, Marvel's other maladjusted adolescent, his powers at least represented a kind of (ambiguous) freedom. For the X-Men, they meant being sent out on dangerous missions by an older man who remained at home -- as Daniels notes, an unsettling parallel to Vietnam.

Evidence of his unpopularity with readers can be inferred from the fact that Marvel killed him off in issue 42 (March, 1968). Though Daniels makes no mention of the Professor's disability, we are forced to wonder whether this contributed to his lack of acceptance by the readership. On internal evidence, we may conclude that the writers and artists, at least, believed it did. He was given a pair of mechanical legs, enabling him to walk; efforts were made to bring him closer to the action (eg. issues 12 and 13, July and September, 1965, in which he battled his own step-brother); and his courage, power and heroism were continually stressed (as in Marvel Girl's comment, above).

Following Weinberg and Santana's contention that disabled characters are either all good or all bad, we can see Xavier as a victim of stereotyping. Like Dr Blake, he was far too good ever to engage our interest as a fully-rounded individual. He lacked the defects of his (able-bodied) equivalent in the Fantastic Four, Reed Richards, who, according to Stan Lee, "talks too much, he's too ponderous, and he drives the others crazy." (Daniels, 1991, p.85). Professor Xavier was saddled with the role of saint, a perfect master, always good, always right. In conforming to cliche, not only was an inaccurate stereotype of disabled people perpetuated, but the character was weakened in a dramatic sense, as well. Would it have been such bad taste -- or so much against the Comics Code -- to show a man in a wheelchair behaving as fallibly, or even selfishly, as anybody else?

The notion of self-sacrifice seemed inherent in Professor Xavier's role, as if he could have no life of his own: he was dedicated to training others; his death was a deliberate giving of himself, rather the way that black characters are often sacrificed in Hollywood action movies (Moorcock, 1986); the death may be shocking, but it doesn't deprive us of anyone we've really been made to care about. (Marvel later recanted on this death scene, but that doesn't change its implications). As the Professor's will is read, one X-Man thinks, "He... really had no-one but us! We were... his only family!" (X-Men 46, July, 1968, p.4)

CONCLUSIONS AND FINDINGS

In this paper, we have confined ourselves to looking at two examples of physical disability. Marvel had many other heroes, and some villains, with disabilities; McCue (1993) points out that Lee's

> ...greatest successes came with heroes that had a built-in handicap which they had to combat.

These heroes included Iron Man, with his heart problems, Daredevil, who was blind, and the neurotic Spider-man. Their popularity can be gauged by the long runs of the magazines in which they appeared.

Both Blake and Xavier were mobility impaired. As already indicated, neither character worked well in a dramatic sense. As a result, they were changed; Don Blake decreasing in importance as an individual; Xavier being killed off, returning only to see the magazine cease publication -- The X-Men's real popularity came in a much altered form during the 70s and 80s (Daniels, 1991).

What then, was the difference between Blake and Xavier and other, more successful characters?

Daredevil's blindness and Iron Man's heart problems were invisible disabilities -- which neither affected them cosmetically, nor kept them out of the action. They were well-rounded characters, who experienced normal human dilemmas and difficulties. Blake and Xavier, with their easily discernable disabilities, remained two-dimensional. Xavier was supremely good; Blake, a dedicated doctor, whose profession was caring for others, seemed literally incapable of evil.

In our two case studies, we found the following stereotypes, many of which still appear: the emphasis on the medical model of disability; the "super cripple" whose "brave struggle" to overcome his or her impairments gives him or her an almost magical quality, making up for disability by the development of other faculties; helplessness, powerlessness, inability to deal with problems, dependency on others; being sick and ill; the gravity of their situation (neither Blake nor Xavier were noted for their sense of humour); the equation of disability with child-like characteristics; overcoming disability to do good for others; self-sacrifice, humility and "courage". These misrepresent disabled people.

Marvel's politics seemed to be those of American liberalism (Mondello, 1976), patriotic but also pluralistic and egalitarian. In tackling high-profile problems of the period (racial conflict, the generation gap) Lee created characters who saw both sides of the issues, and attempted peaceful resolutions to problems (Mondello, 1976). In a Rolling Stone interview, he described himself as neither a hippie nor a conservative (Green, 1971).

Nevertheless, inherent contradictions existed between Lee's declared views and the conventions of the superhero genre -- for example, while he always preached conciliation, his comics still relied on a simplistic notion of "good" and "evil" individuals in conflict, with brute force as a major (if not deciding) factor in their duels.

In a similar way, while the introduction of disabled characters in heroic roles may have raised the profile of disabled people in a superficial sense, it also perpetuated many harmful stereotypes.

It is interesting to compare the portrayal of disabled people with that of people of colour. When Marvel's first black hero, the Black Panther, was introduced (Fantastic Four 52, July 1966), he seemed only a little way removed from someone in an old Tarzan film: a noble African chieftain who mixed conventional "tribal" imagery with electronic genius. By the end of the 60s, however, the comics portrayed more realistic images of African-Americans.

No such major changes took place in the portrayal of disabled people. This was perhaps because the disability rights movement was less radicalised than other civil rights groups in the 60s. The Center for Independent Living, Berkeley, for example, was incorporated only in 1972, after the Physically Disabled Students' Program had been set up in 1970 (Shapiro, 1993).

In the 1960s, comic books were widely read. Haugaard (1973) reported that many teachers of reading, both in mainstream schools and specialist schools for the deaf, were encouraging comics to be used in the teaching of reading. But it is not only reading that we learn from comics (Berger, 1971). Their widespread consumption, especially by people at an "impressionable" age, has caused Weinberg (1978) to conclude that disability representation in comics was perhaps the most damaging of all in the media.

> Stereotype assumptions about disabled people are based on superstition, myths and beliefs from earlier, less

> enlightened times... and persist partly because they are constantly reproduced through the communications media. (Barnes, 1992, p.10)

While the mass media cannot be blamed for every attitude and behaviour, there is some evidence to suggest it has a powerful influence in our lives (Shearer, 1984, Yoshida, 1990, Philo, 1990, Davies, 1991, Harris 1991).

As a medium, comic book narrative demands great economy (Weinberg, 1978). Most Marvel books of the period had only twenty pages in which to tell the story; much of the characterisation and information had to be carried visually, and the visual images had to be striking. Inevitably, therefore, there was simplification and appeal to stereotypes.

Visually, a character in a wheelchair may lend himself less obviously to the sort of dramatic, action-filled panels Marvel was noted for in the 60s. To engage the readers' interest, the character would have to have been developed as a personality, and stereotyping effectively prevented this.

Despite the attempts to grapple with real-life issues, this was still, essentially, a fantasy world, one in which wish-fulfilment played a major part. A gloss of realism added drama, deepened the characterisation, and allowed writers to tackle serious subjects; but it often sat uneasily on the basic premise of the superhero genre, which was always very much larger than life.

> It may well be that, if the media continue to present the disabled as different from the non-disabled, as either exceptionally good or exceptionally evil, but never of ordinary stature, the stereotype will long endure and equal acceptance of the disabled will never triumph.
> (Weinberg, 1978, p.331)

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The Effects of Collaborative Learning Techniques on Student Learning and Attitudes Toward Mass Communication

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A field experiment using a nonequivalent control group design examined the effects of a three-session teaching module about the history of mass communication using collaborative learning techniques and computer-based interactive multimedia courseware on students' knowledge of historical facts and their attitude toward mass communication as a career choice. This pretest/posttest, control/treatment design allowed for within subject comparisons of the test scores while comparisons of the collaborative learning technique itself was between subject. The design is quasi-experimental because intact classes were used for the treatment and control groups.

Both the treatment and the control group showed significant increase on scores for all three dependent variables. An interaction effect was found for both factual knowledge and attitude toward career in mass media wherein the increase in scores was significantly greater for those who had experience the collaborative learning treatment than for those who had had traditional lectures throughout the semester.

In a time of decreasing enrollment in mass communication programs and a heightened student desire for computer experience, these results suggest that innovative teaching approaches using interactive multimedia may increase student interest and involvement in mass communication as a college major and a career possibility.

Funding for this research provided by a grant to the authors by their university's office of research and development.

Presented to the Scholastic Journalism Division
of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication
at the annual meeting in Washington, D.C., August 1995

The Effects of Collaborative Learning Techniques on Student Learning and Attitudes Toward Mass Communication

As enrollments decline in many journalism and mass communications programs (Kosicki & Becker, 1994) faculty and administrators find that one function of the traditional introductory course has dramatically changed. What was once a large class designed to screen out students may now be needed to recruit and retain quality students. Consequently faculty and administrators may be motivated to take a new look at these courses to assess whether they are desirable. However, dwindling resources may make the perceived efficiencies of these classes too attractive to eliminate. A remaining option is to make them more attractive and engaging to students by innovating creative, yet effective classroom management strategies in contrast to the traditional lecture format.

The use of small group collaboration[1] is an inexpensive method to make class experiences more interesting. It has become increasingly popular and effective at all levels of education (Johnson, Johnson, Holubec & Roy, 1984; Adams & Hamm, 1990), and its positive impact on learning has been well documented (e.g. Slavin, 1983; Hooper, 1992).

The definition of collaborative learning is not necessarily consistent across the literature (Hooper, 1992). Not all small group learning methods have the same size, structure, functions or relationship among members. Strategies and tasks of groups can vary considerably (King, 1993; Slavin, 1987). In this paper a collaborative student group refers to a relatively heterogeneous group of seven or fewer university-level students collaborating as much as possible as equals in terms of status, knowledge, and engagement.

Most experience and research with collaboration in small groups has been in small to medium sized classes. Despite the documented advantages of collaborative learning in smaller class settings, McKinney and Buxton (1993) found that little has been written about its use with large classes (100 students or more). There are inherent advantages, however. Working in groups reduces the isolation and anonymity of large classes, an especially desirable goal in a class that is a first experience in a major for a student. Collaborative groups give students a break from lectures and a chance to discuss course material. Groups give students interpersonal communication experience they will need in upper-level classes, graduate school and in an increasing number of work situations. Finally, and of special importance to mass communication education, small group assignments can be devised to emphasize critical thinking, verbal elaboration and questioning (King, 1990). An excellent goal or product of collaboration can be writing (McKinney & Buxton, 1993; Haber, 1994).

Those few who have tried to use small group collaborative in large classes report encouraging results. Privateer and MacCrate (1993) reported that 95% of students taking a large general education humanities class with collaborative groups and hypertext resource disks preferred the approach over the traditional large lecture course. The attrition rate in the class dropped from 25% to less than 11%. McKinney and Buxton (1993) reported slightly higher average class grades in a large introductory sociology class. However, these studies have had methodological shortcomings. This study seeks to build on this research about large classes by using a powerful design with as many reliability and validity safeguards as possible in an inherently quasi-experimental setting.

Construction theory

Theories of social construction of knowledge can account for the learning evident in many small group collaborative situations (Bearison, 1982; Vgotsky, 1978). The constructionist theory of learning sees books and journals as vessels of information, not knowledge. Knowledge is understanding in the mind of the knower. Therefore an individual must construct knowledge by trying to make sense of new information in terms of what the learner already knows. The constructionist view of small group collaborative explains that peer interaction, especially interaction involving differing views, leads individuals to gain understanding through the construction of new knowledge or the transformation of old knowledge into new knowledge. The use of questions seems to be especially effective in encouraging small group collaborative, especially when the questions are designed to encourage higher-level thinking, elaboration, and verbalizing of elaboration (King, 1990; Webb, 1989).

The cognitive benefits of processing information deeply enough to impart it to others seem to be much greater than just receiving information (Hooper, 1992). So an effective technique can be to differentiate tasks of individuals in groups working on common projects. Students become specialists in certain areas with the responsibility of mastering certain information. Then they must verbally convey that information to others in the group. Slavin (1983) found that differentiating tasks increased the energy of students. He also found that the more heterogeneous the group the more likely students are to form positive attitudes about learning. In a large university class setting McKinney and Buxton (1993) also found some evidence that group collaboration helped encourage interest in taking more sociology classes.

In summary, previous research suggests collaboration in small groups of university students in large classes might improve in three important areas: general knowledge of subject matter, ability to verbally elaborate about subject matter, and attitudes about subject matter. Journalism education has long recognized the importance of collaboration, too, not necessarily in classes, but in realistic newsroom experiences for students to practice their new skills and assist each other in the process. The authors of this study wanted to see whether such collaboration can improve performance in mass communication classes, too, especially large classes.

Purpose of the Study

This study investigates the effects of a collaborative learning technique known as the "jigsaw" used in concert with an interactive multimedia courseware product on the knowledge and attitudes of college students in an introductory mass communication course. The purpose was to determine if highly-structured, small-group interaction sessions focused on specific problem-solving tasks using resource materials furnished via a computer-based interactive multimedia program would increase student's knowledge of the material, increase their personal assessment of their communicative abilities, and/or increase their favorability toward mass communication as a career choice.

Based on the generally agreed upon efficacy of instruction at the college level, the following three hypotheses are advanced:

Hypothesis 1:

Scores on factual knowledge will increase significantly in both the control and the treatment group between the pretest and the posttest.

Hypothesis 2:
Scores on the personal assessment of communication ability variable will increase significantly in both the control and the treatment group between the pretest and the posttest.

Hypothesis 3:
Scores on the attitudes about mass communication as a career will increase significantly in both the control and the treatment group between the pretest and the posttest.

Based on the research into collaborative learning approaches and the use of computer-based technology in college-level courses, the following three additional hypotheses are advanced:

Hypothesis 4:
The increase of scores on factual knowledge for the treatment group will be significantly greater that will the scores for the control group.

Hypothesis 5.
The increase of scores on the personal assessment of communication ability variable for the treatment group will be significantly greater that will the scores for the control group.

Hypothesis 6.
The increase of scores on the attitudes about mass communication as a career for the treatment group will be significantly greater that will the scores for the control group.

Method

The quasi-experimental design was a nonequivalent control group design were the treatment and a control groups were comprised of intact existing classes rather than individuals assigned to condition randomly. (Campbell & Stanley, 1966, pp.47-50) Both groups were given pretests and posttests, but the groups did not have pre-experimental sampling equivalence. The treatment group participated in a special teaching module on the history of mass communication over the course of three class sessions early in the semester. Time normally devoted to lectures was instead spend in as many as 21 small-group problem-solving sessions all occurring simultaneously. Factual material normally presented during lectures was instead delivered via a computer-based, interactive multimedia program available to all students outside the class period. The control group participated in traditional lecture sessions throughout the semester.

The dependent variables were factual knowledge, assessment of communication ability, and career potential. Each was measured using multiple items. The independent variables were treatment condition and time of test.

Subjects

One hundred and ten students enrolled in one of two cross-listed introductory mass communication courses at a major midwestern university completed both the pretest and posttest questionnaires. Sixty six subjects were in the class that acted as the treatment group and 44 were in the control group. [2] Both classes were taught the same course material, used the same textbook, and were held in same classroom, but each was lead by a different instructor and was listed under a different catalog number.[3]

Materials and Variables

The pretest and posttest used paper questionnaires to measure both factual knowledge and attitudes, as well as basic demographic information. The demographic questions asked subjects' sex, age, hometown environment (rural, suburban, or urban), parental income (less than or greater than $50,000), and area of the media they hoped to work in upon graduation.

The factual knowledge variable was measured using six questions about the history of mass communication—each followed by four possible answers. The total number of correct answers was summed to form a scale ranging from 1 to 6.

The assessment of communication ability variable was measured using eight statements about expectations for the course—each followed by a five-point scale of "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" where the midpoint was "neutral."[4] The most positive response was scored five and the least was one. The sum of all scores was divided by eight to form a scale ranging from 1 to 5.

The career potential variable was measured using two statements about the likelihood the subject would pursue a career in mass communication followed by a five-point scale of "very likely" to "very unlikely" where the midpoint was "unsure."[5] Again, the most positive response was scored five and the least was one. The sum of the scores was divided by two to form another scale ranging from 1 to 5. The only difference between the pretest and posttest questions was the use of future tense in the pretest's non-factual questions and past tense in the posttest's.

The treatment consisted of two parts: a teaching approach using collaborative learning techniques and the computer delivery of resource material. Ten weeks elapsed between the pretest and the posttest.

Procedure

During the second week of the semester, each class filled out the pretest questionnaire. They were told it was part of research the college faculty were conducting, that their responses would be ungraded and anonymous, and that another questionnaire would be given later in the semester.[6]

On the last day of the third week of the semester, the authors gave a fifteen-minute orientation session to the normally assembled class. The general nature of the exercise was described, a detailed handout about the procedures and rational was distributed, and a floppy disk containing the resource program was provided to each student who owned a computer. Students were also provided with schedules and locations for the three university computer labs were the resource software could be used. Each student was assigned to one of five "expert" groups, given a series of written questions to guide their reading. They were told to read the material in the computer software that pertained to their group prior to the next week's class meetings and be prepared to act as a topic expert among a group of their peers.

Collaborative learning technique. For the three class sessions during the fourth week of the semester, the authors overtook administration of the course from the regular instructor and used collaborative learning techniques and the computer-based resource materials to teach the section of the course on the history of mass communication. The authors used a form of the "jigsaw" procedure where activities are designed so that each student in small subgroups of the entire class actively searches out and learns only part of the learning materials. (Aronson, et al., 1978) The student is then responsible for teaching it to the others in the group and learning those parts which the other group members are teaching. The individual student's contribution is like one piece in a jigsaw puzzle. The group goal is to understand the whole picture and through this process the individual arrives at personal understanding as well. Instructors gave no lectures, but did periodically give instructions to the entire class and answer questions raised by particular groups or individuals.

Student assignment to groups was systematic so that each five to seven-person group constructed was heterogeneous as to sex, age, major, hometown environment, and parental income level. Each subject participated in at least one newly composed group on each of the three days the experimental approach was used. Multiple group membership provided each subject an opportunity to interact with approximately two dozen different classmates, each time bringing his/her individual knowledge about the general subject to bear on solving the specific problem the group was assigned.

The problems were constructed in such way that a contemporary schema was presented as a basis for solving a historical problem. Each required group discussion and collaborative writing of a single solution that represented the group's decision. Each student was assessed according to a combination of group grades, peer evaluations, and a cumulative, single-author essay-graded by the instructor, thereby emphasizing individual accountability for participation in the project.

Interactive multimedia resource. The computer program that provided the interactive, multimedia format for the resource materials was either HyperCard® or Toolbook® depending on the type of computer used. Each version was identical as to text and graphics provided. The text was compiled from a variety of sources including mass communication textbooks, area specific textbooks (ie. broadcasting, advertising, publishing, etc.), and government documents. The program allowed the student to read the dozen different "chapters" assigned to each expert group in whatever order the student found appealing and allowed for keyword search. Graphics were limited to still line images. Text accounted for approximately 500K of storage space and graphics for about 200K so that the entire resource fit on a single floppy disk.

Results

Student's t-tests were used to compare the demographic measures between the control and treatment groups as confirmation of the assumption that the two classes were roughly equivalent prior to the experiment. Neither sex, major, hometown environment, nor parental income level was significantly different between the groups. The average age of the control group, however, was significantly older than the treatment group, t = 2.26 (df=107) p<.026. Average age for the control group was 22.4 years and 20.8 years for the treatment group.

Repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze the three dependent variables (factual knowledge, assessment of communication ability, and career potential). Separate equations were analyzed for each dependent variable and F ratios are all from individual univariate results.

Hypothesis 1:

The hypothesis predicted that scores on factual knowledge would increase significantly in both the control and the treatment group between the pretest and the posttest. The main effect of time between the tests was significant in the predicted direction, F(1,108) = 14.50, p<.0001.

Hypothesis 2:

The hypothesis predicted that scores on the assessment of communication ability would increase significantly in both the control and the treatment group between the pretest and the posttest. The main effect of time between the tests was significant in the predicted direction, F(1,108) = 52.56, p<.0001.

Hypothesis 3:

The hypothesis predicted that scores on the attitudes about mass communication as a career would increase significantly in both the control and the treatment group between the pretest and the posttest. The main effect of time between the tests was significant in the predicted direction, F(1,108) = 9.46, p<.003.

Hypothesis 4:

The hypothesis predicted the increase of scores on factual knowledge for the treatment group would be significantly greater that would the scores for the control group. The interaction effect between time and group was significant and in the predicted pattern, F(1,108) = 6.95, p<.01, indicating that the treatment group's increase was significantly larger than the control group increase.

Hypothesis 5

The hypothesis predicted the increase of scores on the assessment of communication ability for the treatment group would be significantly greater that would the scores for the control group. The interaction effect between time and group was not significant, F(1,108) = 0.13.

Hypothesis 6

The hypothesis predicted the increase of scores on the attitudes about mass communication as a career for the treatment group would be significantly greater that would the scores for the control group. The interaction effect between time and group was significant and in the predicted pattern, F(1,108) = 3.96, p<.049, indicating that the treatment group's increase was significantly larger than the control group increase.

The results suggest that both the traditional lecture approach used in the control group and the collaborative learning approach used in the treatment group produced significant increases in the factual knowledge, self-perceived communicative abilities, and attitude toward mass communication as a career possibility. The collaborative learning approach, however, produced increases of significantly greater magnitude than the control group in factual knowledge and attitude toward a career choice. See Table 1.

Table 1
Cell means and standard deviations for pretest and posttest scores in the control and treatment conditions. (higher = more positive)

	dependent variable	range	pretest scores		posttest scores	
			mean	std.dev.	mean	std.dev.
control group	factual knowledge	(1-6)	**3.93**	1.17	**4.11**	1.26
	communicative abilities	(1-5)	**3.71**	.71	**4.36**	.78
N=44	attitude toward mass comm.	(1-5)	**4.46**	1.68	**4.73**	2.62
treatment group	factual knowledge	(1-6)	**3.76**	1.22	**4.76**	1.29
	communicative abilities	(1-5)	**3.18**	.84	**3.91**	.74
N=66	attitude toward mass comm.	(1-5)	**3.44**	1.81	**4.71**	2.76

Discussion

The goal of this study was to explore the effect of collaborative learning approach used in concert with computer-based interactive multimedia resource material on the factual knowledge, self-assessed communicative abilities, and attitude toward mass communication as a career on college students enrolled in a large introductory mass communication class.

Because random assignment to experimental condition was impossible, the results can only be considered suggestive rather than confirmatory. An additional limitation is the long time elapse between application of the treatment and posttest measurement. Initial plans called for the posttest just one week after treatment and would have permitted greater isolation of the effect. Unfortunately, the primary instructor in one of the classes was unable to schedule time for the posttest until rather late in the semester (eight weeks after the treatment). This increases the possibility that some difference other than the treatment accounts for the observed difference between the two classes.

Nevertheless, the long time lapse actually improves the internal reliability of the factual knowledge measure, however. Had the posttest been sooner, less claim could be made that long-term memory was measured. And since it is long-term memory that is most likely improved by the higher level cognitive processes invoked by collaborative learning techniques, the long time period between learning and testing may have revealed the magnitude differences between the two classes better than a measure made earlier. Both classes increased their knowledge of mass communication history—the principal reason for teaching the topic. That the long-term recall of historical facts was considerably greater for those who learned through collaboration than through lecture is an important finding regardless of whether students are more likely to pursue study in the discipline or not. Collaboration enhances learning.

The more surprising and encouraging aspect of the results is that the collaborative learning experience may well increase the likelihood that students do indeed pursue careers in the mass media. Given the nature of work in the field—necessarily collaborative and dependent on the exchange of ideas to create a single message representing the entire group—it is only appropriate that students who thrive on such experience in the classroom would find a career in mass media appealing.

Equally encouraging perhaps is that collaborative learning through small-group interaction can work even in large classes. The use of the techniques requires the university professor to organize, schedule, coordinate activities to a far greater extent than is necessary for a traditional lecture. Assignment to heterogeneous groups, assignment of seating, creation of discussion problems, scheduling of group activities, and coordination of two dozen groups of people all talking at once all take time and effort above and beyond that necessary for traditional large-class lecturing. And the lectures must still be prepared—not for oral delivery but rather for inclusion in the computerized courseware. Add to these additional tasks the fact that most large university classrooms are physically designed to accommodate little other than row after row of stationary listeners and the challenge of collaborative learning begins to appear rather daunting. This study suggests that the payoff in terms of long-term recall of facts and heightened interest in the general subject matter may well be worth the effort.

Of more serious concern is whether university faculty are up to the task generally. King suggests that the professor using collaborative learning techniques must learn to be "a guide on the side rather than a sage on the stage." (King, 19, p. 30) If, as it is so often claimed, that the information age requires individuals who can pose and solve complex problems and in the process produce new knowledge, it is then vitally important that students of mass communication be taught using methods that encourage them to reconstruct information rather than to passively receive it like an empty vessel. In effect, this constructivist approach requires the professor to coach, encourage, probe, and prod the student into making new connections and realizations.

At the primary and secondary levels, this may well require small class size so that each student has frequent interaction with the teacher. But at the college level, students are far more mature and come to the classroom with a considerable store of knowledge with which to integrate new information and perspectives. Here, large classes may ultimately work because the students can act as each others teaching. As any professor will tell you, one doesn't really know the subject until one has taught it.

Notes

[1] The terms collaboration and cooperation are both used in reference to teaching approaches based on constructivist theories of learning. We've used collaborative because it is more often associated with writing exercises.

[2] At the time of the pretest there were 113 students in the control group class and 135 in the treatment group class. In the control class, 99 took the pretest and 57 took the posttest. In the treatment class, 117 took the pretest and 84 took the posttest. No student declined to participate in either the pretest or the posttest questionnaire. Absences are attributed to normal attendance patterns.

[3] The semester in which the experiment was conducted was the last semester for the cross-listing of the same course under two different names. A single course name was applied the following semester.

[4] The statements all began with "I expect this course to..." in the pretest and with "This course (past tense verb)..." The root statements were "stimulate my creativity," "improve my interpersonal skills," "help me decide on a career," "help me be a wiser consumer of media," "improve my understanding of new issues and viewpoints," "improve my information seeking abilities," "build relationships with future colleagues," "increase my chances at getting a job."

[5] The statements were "How likely do you think it is that you will take additional classes in advertising, journalism, radio & TV, photography, or cinematography after this semester?" and "How likely do you think it is that you will someday work as a professional in the mass media or a closely related field?"

[6] Treatment of participants in this research was in accordance with the ethical standards of the American Psychological Association, Principle 9.

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High School Press Freedom Legislation: A Survey of Key Promoters

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A paper presented to the Scholastic Journalism Division,
Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication,
Washington, D.C.

August 11, 1995

Running Head: KEY PROMOTERS

High School Press Freedom Legislation: A Survey of Key Promoters

Abstract

This study surveyed the key promoters of state high school press freedom legislation in 18 states and asked what they have learned, what they would do differently, and what advice they have for others. The respondents indicated that they spent considerable time and effort, learned a lot about the political process, faced a variety of obstacles and frustrations that derailed their efforts, but were also encouraged by the educational process that occurred.

High School Press Freedom Legislation: A Survey of Key Promoters

Numerous high school and college journalism educators and state legislators, a handful of media professionals, and other concerned individuals in at least 29 states have attempted to reverse the adverse effects of the January 1988 *Hazelwood School District vs. Kuhlmeier* decision.

In four states—Massachusetts in 1988, Iowa in 1989, Colorado in 1990, and Kansas in 1992—these efforts have been successful. In addition, California has had a student free-expression law since 1977.

Most efforts, however, have not been successful. In the fall of 1994, the *Student Press Law Center Report* reported, "As the year's state legislative sessions draw to a close, the outlook for high school free-expression bills remains bleak. Each of the eight proposed bills this session either fizzled and died or were killed in committees or votes on the floor" (More state ... , p. 10). The proposed bills were in Arizona, Idaho, Missouri, Michigan, New Jersey, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin.

Many of the key promoters of these bills, however, are persistent. Mark Goodman, SPLC executive director, reported that at least eight states were planning to introduce or reintroduce bills in 1995—Arkansas, Idaho, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Nebraska, Oregon, and South Carolina (fax communication, Jan. 3, 1995).

This study surveyed high school publication advisers, scholastic press association directors, college journalism educators, media professionals, and other concerned persons who are currently involved or have been involved in promoting legislative efforts. These individuals have often carried the brunt of the workload, initiating their state's efforts, helping write bills, and soliciting support from various individuals and groups.

The purpose of this study was to gather advice and insights from these individuals about what they've learned that can help others who wish to mount efforts in their states or that can provide new strategies for those who are reintroducing legislation.

Literature review

Since 1988, a considerable amount of research and analysis has been done to assess the impact of the *Hazelwood* decision on high school journalism. Dvorak, Lain, and Dickson's *Journalism kids do better* (1994) contains a thorough reference list (46 citations spanning more than 11 pages with a synopsis of each entry) under the heading "Legal issues relating to *Hazelwood*."

The literature indicates that the *Hazelwood* decision has been attacked on at least three main fronts: (1) Concerned individuals and organizations have sought to gain the attention of the professional press, (2) Concerned individuals and organizations have pressed for state press freedom legislation, and (3) High school journalists have attacked *Hazelwood* with responsible journalism.

On the first front, David Zweifel, editor of the *Capital Times* in Madison, Wis., attempted to inform media professionals about his concerns regarding the *Hazelwood* decision with a three-article package in the *ASNE Bulletin* (1990).

Three years later in a cover story in the March 1993 *ASNE Bulletin*, Diane McFarlin said that high school journalism was in trouble and its framework was leaning. "Newspaper editors," she wrote, "are key members of the salvage crew that can keep it from falling" (p. 5). ASNE's Education for Journalism Committee, which McFarlin chaired, produced a tabloid report, "Rescuing high school journalism," which was distributed during the 1993 March ASNE convention and mailed to members.

The Freedom Forum's *Death by cheeseburger* (1994) is also helping to spread the message of high school journalism to newspaper editors. The Freedom Forum concluded that editorial and financial restrictions on high school newspapers are mounting.

Concerned journalism educators also are pushing for passage of state free-expression laws that would limit the prior restraint and censorship authority of school officials. Henry (1990) and Overbeck (1977) discussed the efforts of individual states to pass legislation. Henry wrote that the successful passage of Senate Bill 99 in Colorado was "due to a broad coalition of high school newspaper advisers, students, teachers, educators' associations, and concerned individuals who charted largely unfamiliar political waters" (p. 14). Overbeck, an attorney, examined what he called "a remarkable first instance of any state setting up specific statutory safeguards for the freedom of official school newspapers" (p. 1). In 1993, Olson, Van Ommeren, and Rossow compared and contrasted the provisions of the five existing laws, and in 1994 they examined the characteristics of the state senators and legislators who sponsored state free speech legislation.

Although little academic research has examined efforts to pass high school press legislation, organizations and individuals have tracked such activity. For instance, the Student Press Law Center and AEJMC's Scholastic Journalism Division's Professional Responsibility and Freedom Committee maintain up-to-date records of state efforts. In addition, unpublished material is available. Mary Arnold, executive director of the Iowa High School Press Association, supplies a packet of material from her state's successful effort to interested journalism educators. It includes a summary of her state's efforts, a descriptive timeline that includes significant dates and events, plus letters, newspaper and newsletter articles, and other relevant materials, also arranged in time sequence. Supporters in Missouri have a seven-page paper that explains why a Missouri student expression law is needed and the transcript of Kirkwood (MO) High School Principal Franklin McCallie's presentation before the Missouri House of Representatives Committee on Judiciary and Ethics on February 14, 1995.

On the third front, high school journalists have attacked *Hazelwood*. Alan Adler, an associate of ASNE's legal counsel, reported, "With a ferocity that should put some of their mainstream professional elders to shame, high school journalists are fighting a variety of battles in defense of student press freedom" (p. 8).

Dickson's study suggested that "editors and other student journalists are not avoiding controversial topics. However, they may be approaching them more carefully." His study showed "that the student press can still thrive despite the [*Hazelwood*] ruling" (1993, p. 15).

And, in the first student publication censorship case to reach a state's highest court since the *Hazelwood* decision, the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled unanimously last year that the First Amendment protected a junior high school reporter's right to review R-rated films. The *SPLC Report* article on the decision (*Desilets v. Clearview Regional Board of Education*) said, "Although the decision left some gray areas for student journalists, it was a victory under *Hazelwood* nonetheless" (Chipping away ... , 1994-95, p. 26).

In addition to literature zeroing in on student press rights, two other articles are pertinent to student press-freedom legislative efforts. Whaples and Waugaman (1982) suggested that the most effective lobbying methods are personal visits to the legislator's office, telephone calls, letters, contacts by other legislators, testifying at hearings, and telegrams. Less effective methods are contacts at social affairs, with media, and through petitions. Heftel (1984) provided techniques for preparing and making effective presentations to legislators, including statement content and length, behavior with legislators, answering questions, and post hearing activities.

Methodology

This study examined the second front mentioned above—efforts to pass state legislation countering the negative effects of the *Hazelwood* decision. Specifically, this study surveyed the key promoters of state free-expression bills who have sponsored or are currently sponsoring such legislation. The survey population was small, so inferential statistics were not used.

In January 1995 the authors asked officials at the Student Press Law Center and the Journalism Education Association to provide the names of key individuals active in promoting *anti-Hazelwood* legislation. The authors asked those who received the survey to provide the names of other key individuals in their states and received one additional name. In early February 1995 the authors mailed a four-page survey (Appendix A) to 33 individuals. Four more were sent later as names/addresses became available. Follow-up postcards were mailed February 24 to non-respondents.

Surveys were returned from 25 of the 37 individuals (67.6 percent) and 18 of the 26 states contacted (69.2 percent). States represented were Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas (4 responses), Michigan, Missouri (4), Nebraska (2), Nevada, Ohio, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. (One respondent has been involved in two states and reported on both via one survey.)

Of the 25 respondents, six are scholastic press association directors (2 to 10 years experience with an average of 6.1 years), 15 are high school journalism teachers (6 to 25 years experience, 19.7 years average), nine are media professionals (two to 33 years, 15.7 years average), seven are college journalism educators (1 to 19 years, 7.3 years average). Other respondents indicated their responsibilities as: a high school principal of 16 years, a former high school adviser for five years, a speech communication professor of 21 years, and a television media teacher of eight years. (Note: The sum of these totals exceeds 25 because several respondents indicated dual or even triple responsibilities, such as media professional and college journalism educator or scholastic press association director, high school adviser, and college journalism educator).

Nearly 70 percent indicated their bachelor's degree was in English or journalism or both. Eighty percent have a master's degree, with the most common fields being journalism, mass communication, English, education, or various combinations thereof. Twenty-eight percent have coursework beyond a master's degree, and eight percent have doctorates.

Seventy-six percent of the respondents had worked on a high school newspaper or yearbook or had taken high school journalism classes, while 68 percent had college journalism experience.

Results

In addition to six items that obtained information about the respondents, 21 other items provided information about respondents' experiences sponsoring state free-expression bills, what they have learned in their states, and what advice they have for others.

The authors asked respondents how important they considered high school press freedom compared with other high school issues, such as teacher certification, salaries, violence in schools, school prayer, etc. Fifty-six percent said it was "more important than most other issues," and 44 percent said it was "about as important as most other issues." No one said it was "not as important as most other issues."

Respondents were asked to check all the responses that explained why they were promoting high school press-freedom legislation. All of the respondents marked "because of concern for students' First Amendment rights." Eighty percent of the respondents selected both "because of my personal experience with journalism" and "because of the *Hazelwood* ruling." Thirty-six percent chose "because of encouragement from high school publications advisers" and 20 percent chose "because of encouragement from high school press associations." There were two write-in responses. One was "because the marvelous value of high school journalism will crumble without a free press. What can you learn from a PR rag?!!" The other was "because high expectations for student journalists is the only way to achieve great student press."

What role(s) did these key individuals play in promoting high school press-freedom legislation? Again, respondents could check more than one response. Eighty percent selected "prepared/distributed supporting material to give to legislators."

Seventy-six percent marked both "solicited support from high school students" and "solicited support from media professionals." Sixty-eight percent selected "solicited support from non-journalism related organizations or associations (i.e., ACLU, teachers, school administrators, or school board associations)" and 64 percent chose "testified before legislators." Fifty-six percent marked "helped write the bill" and 32 percent chose "solicited support from high school publications advisers."

Write-in responses to this question included serving on a state-wide committee, writing articles, columns, and pamphlets (not just for legislators), lobbying legislators, writing letters, making many phone calls, and meeting with the governor and state education secretary.

How much time did the respondents devote to promoting this legislation? One person each selected "a little time for a few weeks" and "a little time for a few months." Twenty percent chose "a lot of time for a few months" and 52 percent selected "a lot of time over a longer period of time." Two respondents wrote in that they had put in "some time" over a period of years. Another, Principal Franklin McCallie from Missouri, wrote, "I have written and spoken often over the last three years."

Fifty-two percent of the respondents said they had no political experience before becoming involved in promoting high school press-freedom legislation, while 48 percent said they had "some" experience. No one indicated "much" experience. After becoming involved in sponsoring legislation, 76 percent said they now had "some" experience and 20 percent said they had "much" political experience.

The respondents did a variety of things to prepare themselves to sponsor legislation. Eighty-eight percent said they had "read articles relating to high school press freedom and the political process," 76 percent indicated they had "talked with concerned journalism educators in other states who had promoted legislative efforts," and 60 percent had "sought coaching from others who knew more about the political process." Forty-four percent reported that they "sought information from professional journalists and their press associations," and only eight percent indicated they "made no special preparation." Write-in responses included: "sought help from the Student Press Law Center and Journalism Education Association," "worked with attorney for state press association," and "conducted a major research project for ASNE on the subject."

Respondents were given three sets of responses to choose from that best described the relationship they had with the legislator(s) who sponsored the legislation in their state. In the first set, 40 percent said "we maintained frequent contact," 32 percent said "we had occasional contact," and 20 percent said "we had very little contact." In the second set, 80 percent said "he/she was (or is) open to my suggestions," and only eight percent said "he/she was not very open to my suggestions." In the last set, 52 percent said "he/she helped coach me in the legislative process, and I felt actively involved," while 16 percent said "he/she did not coach me in the legislative process, and I did not feel actively involved." Not all of the respondents selected one of the choices in each set.

The respondents were asked to identify some of the key characteristics they felt a legislative sponsor should have. Eighty percent selected "legislative experience," 72 percent chose "an ability to cross party lines," 60 percent chose "well educated," 44 percent chose "personal experience with high school journalism," 36 percent chose "a background in teaching," and 12 percent chose "a specific political party affiliation."

Write-in responses included: a respected legislator; a legislator with knowledge of *Hazelwood*, the First Amendment and "the excellent school publications which function without censorship;" "a belief in education and in students," as well as in freedom of expression for students. Several respondents also pointed out that it is very important to have sponsors and support from both the Republican and Democratic party.

These findings correlate closely with Olson, Van Ommeren, and Rossow's survey of legislative sponsors (1994) which indicated that the "ideal" legislative sponsor might have some of the following characteristics: personal experience with journalism in high school, experience as an educator, experience as a legislator who has developed credibility, accurate knowledge of high school journalism, and the ability to cross party lines.

How much support did these individuals receive from high school journalism advisers in their state? Sixty-four percent said "the majority were supportive, but only a minority were willing to get involved," while 20 percent said "the majority of the advisers were very supportive and willing to get involved." Eight percent said "the majority didn't seem to view the legislation as being necessary." Two write-in responses were "the majority seemed passive" and "hundreds of students wrote letters, made calls in both states" (Indiana and Kansas).

Respondents cited a variety of reasons why they felt legislation failed in their states. Fifty-two percent attributed it to "opposition from school administration and school board members." Other responses were "lack of interest among legislators" (48 percent), "lack of support from the professional media" (44 percent), "concern about unregulated high school publications" (36 percent), and "lack of lobbyist activities among supporters" (28 percent). No respondents indicated opposition from teacher organizations was a problem. Write-in responses included "lack of interest among advisers and students," "close-minded legislators," "our bill was too broad," "ignorance, ultra-right wing attitudes," "bad timing, got tied in with a $ bill," "It did pass; vetoed by governor." One respondent said, "the Senate Republican leader stopped it pretty much by himself." Another said the leader of the Senate in his state kept the bill from going to committee, and one indicated that "powerful opposition from subcommittee chair" killed the bill.

Respondents indicated a variety of frustrations. Seventy-six percent selected "slowness of the law-making process," while 60 percent chose "lack of support from professional journalists." Thirty-six percent marked "lack of involvement by high school publications advisers" and 20 percent selected "lack of knowledge about the legislative process." Write-in responses included "non-democratic political process controlled by one person," "opposition from legislators based on bias or lack of information," "inability of legislators to view high school journalists as serious journalists," "most legislators have little contact with high school journalism, and my fellow high school principals are so afraid," "turnover in legislature has lost our sponsors and made the conservative right very powerful," "original legislator was not well respected," "lack of support from fellow educators outside of journalism," and "the political games."

In an open-ended question, the respondents were asked to list the most encouraging things they have experienced in their efforts to sponsor free-expression legislation. Their responses were:

- Support by students and professional press; support by state education associations.
- The hearing was an excellent experience for students.
- Testimony from high school journalists was impressive — it swung the House Judicial and Rules Committee and got the bill onto the floor, where it was defeated by only a few votes.
- More legislators are listening.
- Contact with students and some professional groups — WIC and First Amendment Congress, for example.
- We finally have bills in both legislative chambers. The Judicial Committee in the House last year recommended passage. We are making gains each year. A few dedicated teachers are working hard for passage.
- Enthusiasm of kids to get involved.

- Intelligence of students, involvement by supportive legislators.
- We found lots of bright, intelligent students to speak at our hearing. We were organized. The judiciary committee chair said it was one of the best hearings he'd heard.
- Lots of positive publicity. We got it through the Indiana House — by 3/4ths margin — two years in a row. Much understanding of the issues was created, even though it never passed Senate and became law. Many professional journalists also supported our efforts editorially. Most advisers and hundreds of students got involved in grassroots politics in both states [Kansas and Indiana] for the first time ever.
- Students wrote to me about my support.
- Organization of the proposing group. Student involvement.
- Educating public and legislators.
- Support from other states at JEA conference but communication is difficult. Support from SPLC.
- Support from colleagues and students; I am a university professor.

Respondents indicated some of the things they would do differently the next time the legislation is introduced in their state. Forty-eight percent said they would increase their "lobbying efforts to educate legislators on the issues involved." Over a third of the respondents (36 percent) selected each of following: "we will seek more help from professional journalists and their associations," "we will attempt to get more high school advisers involved," and "we will attempt to obtain support from non-journalism related organizations or associations." Sixteen percent said they would not try again. Write-in responses were: "Figure out a way to outsmart or defeat Senate

President," "we will cross party lines, work with administrators," "get more to support the bill from both parties," "we will seek support of State School Directors," and "we are attempting to put freedom of expression in educational reform."

The authors asked respondents from the successful states why, in their opinion, the legislation passed. Their write-in responses were:

- Because we had a fortuitous combination of talents and resources.

  Because we worked tirelessly until the very last vote was taken. I was on the phone for hours the night before the vote. (Colorado)
- 1) Timing, 2) personal legislative sponsor, 3) student involvement in legislative hearings, 4) support for bill widespread across the state. (Kansas)
- A pro-active state scholastic press association. A strong legislative leader interested in journalism—and high school journalism. (Kansas)
- 1) Excellent grassroots support, 2) state's commitment to populist politics and support from both parties, 3) active registration and support from state school board association lobbyists. (Kansas)
- We never gave up! (Kansas)

One question on the survey dealt with the problems the *Hazelwood* decision created, followed by four questions concerning the specific bill introduced in each state.

What problems did the *Hazelwood* decision create? Eighty-four percent of the promoters selected "imposed unreasonable restrictions on student press freedoms" and "made high school press freedom an education issue instead of a First Amendment issue." Eighty percent selected "made the principal a publisher." Sixty-four percent said it "made an unwarranted distinction between student and adult rights," and 52 percent said it "held student expression to a higher standard than expected of adults."

It "imposed unreasonable restriction on student press freedoms" was also the most cited response (82 percent) in an earlier survey of legislative sponsors (Olson, Van Ommeren, and Rossow, 1994).

In this survey, the authors asked respondents what the legislation they were promoting prohibited. The items they selected were "dissemination of obscene information" (92 percent), "violation of any lawful school regulation" (88 percent), "prior review or prior restraint unless guidance is voluntarily sought by the student" (80 percent), "invasion of privacy" (72 percent), and "advertising for illegal products and services" (64 percent). Write-in responses were: libel/slander, requires all districts to have a publications policy that guarantees the above freedoms and restrictions, liability placed on the student, and substantial disruption of education process.

In designing their states' bills, 84 percent of the respondents said "student/staff freedom to determine the content of a publication" was of special concern. Other items of concern were "a written policy on press freedoms to be provided to students" (68 percent), "protection for the faculty adviser from libel" (56 percent), "a specially qualified adviser or teacher" (48 percent), "protection for students from libel" (20 percent), and "student/staff freedom to determine the content of broadcasting" (20 percent). Legislators also previously selected "student/staff freedom to determine the content of a publication" as their top choice (82 percent of the respondents) but only 41 percent selected a written policy as being important and only 18 percent viewed "a specially qualified adviser or teacher" as being of special concern (Olson, Van Ommeren, Rossow, 1994).

Sixty percent of the respondents said primary responsibility for the wording of the bill in their state was "a team effort with several individuals involved." Individuals they listed as being involved were legislators, journalism teachers, college journalism advisers and teachers (including a journalism law professor), press association directors and individuals associated with press associations (i.e., NSPA, CSPA, JEA), student journalists, and attorneys. In the survey of legislators, 77 percent said writing the bill was a team effort (Olson, Van Ommeren, and Rossow, 1994).

Thirty-two percent of the respondents said "the legislative sponsors" and 24 percent said the Student Press Law Center sample law were responsible for the way the bill was written. One respondent each indicated that the California, Colorado, Iowa, and Kansas laws were used to help write the legislation, and one respondent said "we looked at all four bills carefully." Write-in responses were: "The house bill was written by social studies students," and "Me, a college representative to the high school press association. Then rewritten by the reviewer of statutes at the request of the Senate speaker."

Eighty-four percent of the respondents said high school press freedom should extend to "all forms of expression including buttons, badges, and arm bands." Sixty-four percent indicated that in promoting the bill in their state, it was their intention that "high school journalists should exercise First Amendment rights on their publications only with the supervision of their advisers," while 32 percent said that was not their intent. In the survey of the legislative sponsors of state free-expression bills, 88 percent indicated it was their intent that high school journalists would exercise their rights only with adviser supervision (Olson, Van Ommeren, and Rossow, 1994).

In another open-ended item, the key promoters of state free-expression bills were also asked what they had learned that would be useful to others who wish to initiate high school press-freedom legislation in their states. Their responses are included in Appendix B. Respondents were also asked to send along supportive materials that they found especially useful in their efforts to promote high school press freedom legislation. The authors received information from respondents in Indiana, Missouri, and Wisconsin.

Discussion

This study asked key promoters of state free-expression bills: What was/is the experience of sponsoring state free-expressions bills like (i.e, time involved, interaction with legislators), what have you learned in your states, and what advice do you have for others?

The survey revealed that key promoters became involved for the reasons one would expect: because of concern for students' First Amendment rights, because of their personal experience with journalism, and because of the *Hazelwood* decision. Few promoters, however, became involved because of encouragement from either high school publication advisers or high school press associations, perhaps simply because 84 percent of the respondents held one of those two positions.

Promoters on the front line of efforts to pass free-expression legislation are actively involved in a variety of tasks, such as helping to write the bills, soliciting support from a variety of individuals and groups, testifying before legislative committees, serving on state committees, and preparing and distributing supporting material to legislators, the two most frequently mentioned activities.

It came as no surprise that 72 percent of the promoters of free-expression legislation reported a heavy time commitment of either "a lot of time for a few months" or "a lot of time over a longer period of time." One respondent indicated a time commitment of several weeks for two years in Kansas and several weeks for three years in Indiana.

It was also not surprising to find that individuals who made the commitment to promote *anti-Hazelwood* legislation became more politically savvy. Over half of the respondents (52 percent) said they had no political experience and 48 percent said they had some experience before becoming involved in free-expression legislation efforts. After becoming involved, however, 76 percent said they had some experience and 20 percent said they had much experience. In addition, the respondents indicated a positive relationship with the legislative sponsors. Seventy-two percent said they maintained either frequent or occasional contact with the sponsor, 80 percent said the sponsor was open to suggestions, and 52 percent said the sponsor "helped coach me in the legislative process, and I felt actively involved."

The key promoters who responded to this survey did not enter the political arena unprepared, but rather did various things to get ready, such as reading articles, talking to others who had promoted legislative efforts, obtaining coaching from others who knew about the political process, and seeking information from other sources.

The findings of this study provided support for an earlier study (Olson, Van Ommeren and Rossow, 1994) of legislative sponsors that summarized some of the key characteristics an "ideal" sponsor might have. Qualifications that rise to the top include experience as a legislator who has developed credibility and power, the ability to cross party lines, personal experience with high school journalism, and knowledge of *Hazelwood,* First Amendment rights, and responsible high school journalism. Another key finding reiterated several times through write-in responses was the need to obtain sponsors from both the Democratic and Republican party.

The respondents indicated that although the majority of high school journalism advisers in their states were supportive of efforts to pass free-expression legislation, only a minority were willing to get involved. Write-in responses, however, to this question and others indicated that large numbers of high school journalism students were not only willing to get involved but also did very well and played a key role.

Respondents indicated a variety of reasons why they felt legislation did not pass in their states, as well as a variety of frustrations. Two major frustrations were slowness of the law-making process and the lack of support from professional journalists, while others were opposition based on bias or lack of information, legislators' lack of contact with high school journalism, and political games.

On the other hand, despite the frustrations that have arisen due to failed attempts in around 25 states, the key promoters listed a number of encouraging results of efforts to pass free-expression legislation. Leading the positive results were comments about the valuable experience students gained and the enthusiastic, articulate testimony they gave. Another positive outcome included a considerable amount of positive publicity educating the public and legislators. One respondent wrote, "We had **hundreds** of student journalists, their parents, friends and advisers involved in both states. The grassroots efforts do make a difference, even if the law doesn't get passed. Greater understanding of the need for tolerance and reasonable freedoms seems to come anyway."

In summary, the message from those who have promoted state free-expression bills to those who wish to mount such efforts is: expect to spend some time at it, expect to learn a lot about the legislative process, be willing to prepare in advance, be aware that a variety of obstacles could derail the legislation, and expect to be frustrated but also very encouraged by the educational process that occurs.

Is all the time and effort in promoting free-expression legislation worth it? Perhaps an adviser from Kansas helps to answer that question. She wrote, "Be patient. Be courteous. Be determined and never give up. The end does justify the means, and I have the scars to prove it."

Conclusion

This survey of key promoters of state free-expression bills helps to chart what Henry called "largely unfamiliar political waters" (p. 15) for concerned journalism educators who wish to initiate the passage of student free-expression laws in their states. This study provides information on what experienced promoters of free-expression legislation have learned, what they will do differently next time, and lists some of their tips and advice. Their expertise will help future key promoters in states that have not yet initiated efforts to avoid uncovering territory that has already been mined. The experience this survey compiles will also help those who plan to reintroduce legislation.

Future research in the area of state free-expression bills could examine the five states that have laws to see if they indeed reduce the incidence of censorship. Such research might reveal whether or not effort should be put into other areas that might prove more fruitful, such as promoting adviser training and certification requirements. One respondent from a state where legislation failed said his state's next step will "probably be to go back and try to get journalism certification (18 hours) for our secondary teachers/advisers. That is so critical at this point. Student freedom of expression is one thing—knowledgeable advisers is another."

In addition, scholastic journalism educators could examine more closely the reasons why the professional press did not oppose the *Hazelwood* decision (see "Editorials support censorship decision," 1988), and then put a concerted effort into addressing those concerns.

Obtaining insights to these and other questions will not only help in the battle against the adverse effects of the *Hazelwood* decision on student press freedoms, but will also help to bolster increasingly beleaguered high school journalism programs around the country.

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Appendix A

High-School Press-Freedom Legislation: A Survey of Key Promoters

Please use a (✔) to mark your response. We have left space on the last page for your comments on any items. Circle the number of the item you want to comment on and refer to that number at the end of the questionnaire.

1. Please indicate how important you consider high-school press freedom compared with other high-school issues, such as teacher certification, salaries, violence in schools, school prayer, etc.:
   ( ) More important than most other issues.
   ( ) About as important as most other issues.
   ( ) Not as important as most other issues.

2. Why are you promoting high-school press-freedom legislation? (check all that apply)
   ( ) Because of the Hazelwood ruling.
   ( ) Because of my personal experience with journalism.
   ( ) Because of concern for students' First Amendment rights.
   ( ) Because of encouragement from high-school publications advisers.
   ( ) Because of encouragement from high-school press associations.
   ( ) Other (please specify) ______________________________

3. What role(s) did you play in promoting high-school press-freedom legislation? (check all that apply)
   ( ) Helped write the bill.
   ( ) Solicited support from high-school publications advisers.
   ( ) Solicited support from high-school students.
   ( ) Solicited support from media professionals.
   ( ) Solicited support from non-journalism related organizations or associations (i.e., ACLU, teachers, school administrators or school board associations).
   ( ) Testified before legislators.
   ( ) Prepared/distributed supporting material to give to legislators.
   ( ) Other (please specify) ______________________________

4. How much time did you devote (or have you devoted) to promoting high-school press-freedom legislation?
   ( ) A little time for a few weeks.
   ( ) A lot of time for a few weeks.
   ( ) A little time for a few months.
   ( ) A lot of time for a few months.
   ( ) A lot of time over a longer period of time.
   ( ) Other (please specify) ______________________________

5. How much political experience did you have **before** becoming involved in promoting high-school press-freedom legislation?
   ( ) none ( ) some ( ) much

6. How much political experience do you feel you have **after** your involvement in promoting high-school press-freedom legislation?
   ( ) none ( ) some ( ) much

7. How did you prepare yourself to sponsor high-school press-freedom legislation? (check all that apply)
   ( ) Made no special preparation.
   ( ) Read articles relating to high-school press freedom and the political process.
   ( ) Sought information from professional journalists and their press associations.
   ( ) Sought coaching from others who knew more about the political process.
   ( ) Talked with concerned journalism educators in other states who had promoted legislative efforts.
   ( ) Other (please specify) ______________________________

(Please continue on the back side of this page)

8. Which of the following statements best describe the relationship you had/have with the legislator(s) who sponsored (or are sponsoring) the legislation in your state? (check one in each group)
    ( ) We had very little contact.
    ( ) We had occasional contact.
    ( ) We maintained frequent contact.

    ( ) He/she was (or is) open to my suggestions.
    ( ) He/she was not very open to my suggestions.

    ( ) He/she helped coach me in the legislative process, and I felt actively involved.
    ( ) He/she did not coach me in the legislative process, and I did not feel actively involved.

9. Which of the following characteristics do you believe a legislative sponsor of a high-school press freedom bill should have? (check all that apply)
    ( ) A background in teaching.
    ( ) Personal experience with high-school journalism.
    ( ) Legislative experience.
    ( ) Well educated.
    ( ) A specific political party affiliation.
    ( ) An ability to cross party lines.
    ( ) Other (please specify) ______________________________

10. How, in general, would you describe the overall support you received from high-school journalism advisers in your state?
    ( ) The majority of the advisers were very supportive and willing to get involved.
    ( ) The majority were supportive, but only a minority were willing to get involved.
    ( ) The majority were not supportive.
    ( ) The majority didn't seem to view the legislation as being necessary.
    ( ) Other ______________________________

11. Why, in your opinion, has the legislation not passed in your state? (check all that apply) *If the legislation passed in your state, skip to question #15.*
    ( ) Lack of interest among legislators.
    ( ) Lack of lobbyist activities among supporters.
    ( ) Lack of support from the professional media.
    ( ) Opposition from school administration and school board members.
    ( ) Opposition from teacher organizations.
    ( ) Concern about unregulated high-school publications.
    ( ) Other (please specify______________________________

12. What are the most frustrating things you have experienced in connection with this legislation? (check all that apply)
    ( ) Lack of knowledge about the legislative process.
    ( ) Slowness of the law-making process.
    ( ) Lack of support from professional journalists.
    ( ) Lack of involvement by high-school publications advisers.
    ( ) Other (please specify) ______________________________

13. What are the most encouraging things you have experienced? (please list items)

____

____

____

(Please continue on the next page)

14. What will you do differently the next time the legislation is introduced in your state?
( ) We will not try again.
( ) We will seek more help from professional journalists and their associations.
( ) We will increase our lobbying efforts to educate legislators on the issues involved.
( ) We will attempt to get more high-school advisers involved.
( ) We will attempt to obtain support from non-journalism related organizations or associations.
( ) Other ____

15. For respondents from Colorado, Kansas, Iowa or Massachusetts: Why, in your opinion, did the legislation pass in your state? (Use the space below to list and prioritize your reasons.)
____
____
____
____

16. In your opinion, what problems did the Hazelwood decision create? (check all that apply)
( ) Made an unwarranted distinction between student and adult rights.
( ) Imposed unreasonable restrictions on student press freedoms.
( ) Held student expression to a higher standard than expected of adults.
( ) Made high-school press freedom an education issue instead of a First Amendment issue.
( ) Made the principal a publisher.

17. The legislation you are promoting (or promoted) prohibits: (check all that apply)
( ) Prior review or prior restraint unless guidance is voluntarily sought by the student.
( ) Dissemination of obscene information.
( ) Invasion of privacy.
( ) Violation of any lawful school regulation.
( ) Advertising for illegal products and services.
( ) Other (please specify) ____________________________________

18. In designing your state's bill, were the following of special concern? (check all that apply)
( ) A specially qualified adviser or teacher.
( ) Student-staff freedom to determine the content of a publication.
( ) Student-staff freedom to determine the content of broadcasting.
( ) Protection for the faculty adviser from libel.
( ) Protection for students from libel.
( ) A written policy on press freedoms to be provided to students.

19. Who was primarily responsible for the wording of the bill in your state?
( ) It was a team effort with several individuals involved. (please specify, such as a high-school adviser, press association director, etc.)____________________________
____

( ) The legislative sponsors.
( ) The Student Press Law Center sample law.
( ) Slight alterations of an existing law. (please specify the state) ____________________
( ) Other (please specify) ____________________________________

20. In your opinion, high-school press freedom should extend to: (check all that apply)
( ) newspapers ( ) yearbooks ( ) broadcast ( ) magazines
( ) All forms of expression including buttons, badges and arm bands.

21. In promoting the bill in your state, was (or is) it your intention that high-school journalists should exercise First Amendment rights on their publications only with the supervision of their advisers?
( ) yes ( ) no

(Please continue on the back side of this page)

Please answer the following questions about yourself. You will not be individually identified in our presentation of findings.

22. Name ____

23. State ____

24. I am a:

( )	scholastic press association director	How long?	______ years
( )	high-school journalism teacher	How long?	______ years
( )	media professional	How long?	______ years
( )	college journalism educator	How long?	______ years
( )	other (please specify) ______________________________		

25. Education

( ) Bachelor's degree in ____
( ) Master's degree in ____
( ) Coursework beyond a master's degree in ______________________________
( ) Doctorate in ____

26. Did you have high-school journalism experience as a student?

( ) none ( ) newspaper ( ) yearbook ( ) journalism class(es)
(please specify: newspaper editor, yearbook sports writer, etc.)____________________________
____

27. Did you have college journalism experience as a student?

( ) none ( ) newspaper ( ) yearbook ( ) journalism minor ( ) journalism class(es)
(please specify your specific role) ____

What have you learned that would be useful to others who wish to initiate high-school press-freedom legislation in their states? Please use the space below for your response and for any comments relating to items in this questionnaire. (If you have supporting materials that you found to be especially effective in your efforts to promote high-school press-freedom legislation, please send them to us if it is possible.)

Thank you!

Appendix B

Responses to "What have you learned that would be useful to others who wish to initiate high school press-freedom legislation in their states?

NOTE: The respondent's state is indicated in parentheses at the end of the entry, unless the response contains the name of the state.

It is a long, tiring process. We hit a committee chair who absolutely opposed us, and we failed. Research, lobbying, and communication are essential for success. (Ohio)

Our sponsors told us we must have the support of either the Principal's Association or State School Board Directors. We also need sponsors from both parties. We found that legislators who had been on staffs while in high school were most supportive. They also respond to extreme war stories. A junior high principal who won't allow a losing game to be reported got us our only Republican sponsor who had been sports editor of his high school paper. (Washington)

Get as many different groups as possible—teacher's unions, state scholastic press, administrator groups, professional media groups, college journalism deans, SPJ campus student chapters, even school board associations—to support your efforts. We had **hundreds** of student journalists, their parents, friends and advisers involved in both states. The grassroots efforts do make a difference, even if the law doesn't get passed. Greater understanding of the need for tolerance and reasonable freedoms seems to come anyway. (From a respondent who was in Kansas and is now in Indiana)

If powers-that-be in the legislature oppose the bill for any reason, your efforts are probably wasted. State legislative efforts are about using power, not about helping people (at least in Arizona).

My experience and that of my colleagues has led me to the conclusion that you must choose your legislative session when the legislature is made up of a more liberal mix. Nevada is an extremely conservative state with a strong religious right. Under these conditions, getting a student press freedom bill passed is next to impossible.

To the best of my knowledge little, if anything, has been done in Texas to promote the passage of legislation. In my opinion, several factors have influenced that lack of action: 1) a perception on the part of advisers that such legislation is unnecessary despite the fact that numerous staffs and advisers have felt the sting of censorship since *Hazelwood* was passed, 2) a feeling that passing such legislation would be impossible given the current conservative mood of our legislature, 3) the lack of a strong, statewide organization.

Please understand that I arrived in Kansas after all the legwork had been completed. My role was merely to testify and to help push the bill through. We had dedicated individuals who had prepared the legislation and had nursed it through on two different occasions. I personally feel that in Republican-oriented Kansas that it was essential to have a Republican representative initiate the legislation with strong Democratic support.

Consensus is crucial in a bipartisan effort. It takes a great deal of time to educate legislators on the professionalism of the press and the value of press freedom as an educational tool. We teach freedom in history and government classes, but deny it in the journalism room. Pray that the message takes root. (Kansas)

The State Education Association has been helpful in finding a legislator sponsor for the bill. Legislators like to hear from students. (Nebraska)

Learn what other states have experienced, but since each state is different, learn your own legislative process. It was fairly easy to find out about the other states, but no one seemed willing to help us learn Illinois from square one. Finally, a new ACLU woman moved to Springfield and she has been wonderful.

Our first step will probably be to go back and try to get journalism certification (18 hours) for our secondary teachers/advisers. That is so critical at this point. Student freedom of expression is one thing—knowledgeable advisers is another. (South Carolina)

Avoid making it a liberal/conservative issue. Get a moderate Republican to sponsor it. (Missouri)

Timing and strategy are crucial. Be sure to have **specific** testimony from students who have suffered because of the *Hazelwood* ruling. Legislators weren't interested in theory/philosophy. (Idaho)

Be patient. Be courteous. Be determined and never give up. The end does justify the means, and I have the scars to prove it. (Kansas)

Remain determined. Don't give up. You need a strong conservative chair to keep efforts going. We finally have one in Missouri this year, and we have made more strides than the previous two years.

I might add these thoughts or suggestions for any state group getting started:

1. Try to show that censorship is not educational and defies many school districts' mission statements or overall goals as educational institutions.
2. Make the opposition provide concrete examples to illustrate their objections (i.e., obscenity).
3. Stress that no one is taking power from the principals. They can control the schools without controlling the speech and thoughts of the students.
4. Get endorsements from a wide variety of groups and organizations. Use these as a position of strength.
5. Check your state laws. Many state Bills of Rights add First Amendment protection.
6. Some state departments of secondary education may be influential and take a stand against censorship.

7. Watch our for the principals and administrative organizations. They have strong lobby groups and will probably (and strangely) be your worst opposition.
8. No one is saying that "anything goes." Use *Tinker* as your strong point. It is good law and educational as well. It set some limits we can all live by.
9. Don't fall for the argument that these state bills give more rights to student than to professional journalists. My response to that is professional journalists can sell their conscience to their paycheck, but we as a nation cannot afford to have our students learn (with our apparent approval) that they should sell their conscience to the state (schools) out of fear or apathy. (Missouri)

You have to **educate** legislators. They haven't seen high school papers since they were in high school. We mailed a portfolio of 5-6 excellent high school papers with a cover letter. Get bright, articulate high school journalists to testify before legislative committees. We did a mailing to high school principals. We sent letters from supportive high school principals to legislators. Marta Hedde, my colleague, was superbly organized. Her mother was a Republican committee woman who mobilized corps of "little old ladies" to lobby legislators. I had professional contacts, including my former editor, then state representative, who co-sponsored. I am [a] strong writer who did most of [the] mailings. Most important: We took nothing for granted. P.S. Forget the professional press. They won't help you because they "don't get it." However, enlist college newspapers. (Colorado)